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THE saint DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

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Edited by LESLIE CHARTERIS

Adventure of the Priory School
by Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

The Madison Murder
by KATHLEEN NORRIS

It the Duke Should Die
by E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Baker Street Weather
by DR. JULIAN D. CORRINGTON

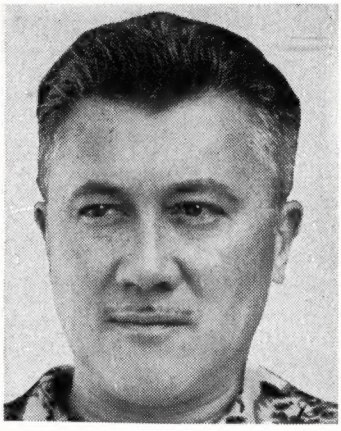
The Treasure of Turk's Lane
by LESLIE CHARTERIS

THE RIDDLE OF DINAH RAFFLES

A NEW STORY by BARRY PEROWNE

SOME OLD, SOME NEW — THE FINEST IN MYSTERY FICTION

A KING-SIZE PUBLICATION



IT MAY SURPRISE many tourists who think of Miami, Florida, only as a town dedicated to dispensing sunshine, sport, and sin, at fancy prices, to learn that it is also the home of one of the most important universities in the South. I am not myself much of a mixer in intellectual circles, but among the eminent domes associated with this campus that I have accidentally encountered in person I can think of the late great meteorologist Grady Norton, the most distinguished oceanologist Walton Smith (who once appeared very briefly in a Saint story), the honorable Dr. Philip Wylie, who sometimes authors a piece for us, and Capt. Bill Gray, who catches the fish for their unique division of marine biology.

Under the palms which substitute for ivy at this academy, the head of the zoology department is a Dr. Julian D. Corrington, an alumnus of Cornell and later a teacher there as well as at several other colleges before he settled at this one, where he currently instructs pre-med students in embryology, histology, and anatomy. This last, to some of us, seems almost a superfluous course at a school which attracts some of the shapeliest co-eds in the country, but some lucky guys get these jobs. In his spare time, Dr. Corrington has proved that he is not the time worn, fog bound-professor type by more activities than we can list here, from serving as a flyer in World War I's embryonic USAAF, to writing popular books on how to have fun with a microscope. He also brought this microscopic approach to a fabulous reading of detective stories; which brings us (if you were wondering) to his article BAKER STREET WEATHER, which I think is not only our most important item this month but an exercise in scholarship which should earn Dr. Corrington a new degree for bringing the scientific method to literature.

Naturally, to tie in with this, we had to feature one of the Sherlock Holmes classics, THE ADVENTURE OF THE PRIORY SCHOOL. But just to redress a balance in favor of too much righteousness, we thought we should toss in a revival of Raffles, whose creator (in case you didn't know) was a relative by marriage of the creator of Sherlock.

And if this issue begins to seem rather like a sort of family album, I hasten to assure you that Kathleen Norris and E. Phillips Oppenheim, who authored other stories in this issue, have absolutely no connection with the clan of Conan Doyle. And you are also getting a bit called THE TREASURE OF TURK'S LANE, by another scribbler who is no kin either.

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GABRIEL HEATTER reports on dramatic new invention that triumphs over hearing loss and hides deafness as never before

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by Gabriel Heatter Internationally Famous Commentator heard nightly over MBS network

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the riddle of dinah raffles

by . . . Barry Perowne

So this was the female of the species; possessing all the family cunning—and with a very special talent of her own!

IN THE sunshine of an autumn noonday, a great many carriages with fringed white canopies and clip-clopping horses were jingling to and fro along the palm-lined esplanade which skirted the blue waters of the Bay of Naples. Among the carriages was one carrying A. J. Raffles and myself, Bunny Manders.

"Too bad you're not sailing with me, Bunny," Raffles said, as he offered me a Sullivan from his cigarette case. "It's still possible, you know, that we could get you a berth in the liner coming in tomorrow. No chance of persuading you to change your mind?"

"None whatever," I said. "I don't mind going along with you on your country house cricket jaunts, but your serious cricket is another matter. Though mind you, I'm very glad you arranged to travel down overland and link up with the rest of the England team here. I wouldn't for worlds have missed this trip down to see you off."

Raffles chuckled. "Good old Bunny! Well, you know your own mind best. I won't try to

One of the peculiarly British personalities who have survived these decades and our increasing preference for less well-bred methods of mayhem, is that eternally young Raffles, the wicked gleam in his eye, whom E. W. Hornung first introduced us to and Barry Perowne has since continued to write about.

press you." He changed the subject. "I wonder what's in this batch of letters?"

We had made a pretty leisured journey here from London, and before he left his rooms at the Albany he arranged for our Naples hotel to be a forwarding address. The letters had been handed to him as we were coming out of our hotel, and now with a word of apology he took them from his pocket and shuffled through them.

"Bills, mostly," he said, "as usual. I—" He broke off. "Now, here's a coincidence," he said. "A letter from Australia—and I'm on my way there."

He tore open the envelope, took out a thick sheaf of notepaper, unfolded it, glanced at the signature on the bottom page. I could have sworn he paled under his tan. He went back to the beginning, began to read. I was troubled by the curious expression still on his face.

"Bad news?" I asked.

He shook his head. "The letter's from my sister," he said—"my sister Dinah." He took a last pull at his cigarette, flicked it out under the canopy. "I've never told you before that I have a sister, have I? Well—she's now on her way to England. I haven't seen her since one summer vacation when she was ten and I was fourteen and we were both home from boarding-schools."

He looked out thoughtfully over the incomparable bay. "When my father died," he went on, "he left precious little. And he had only one relative, an uncle in Australia, a very good, solid bloke, some kind of country bank inspector, name of W. F. Raffles. It was arranged that what little my father had left should be used to see me through school, and that Dinah should be sent out to Mr. and Mrs. W. F.

"Dinah and I wrote to each other for a while, but then the letters tailed off. W. F. had a little farm, where he ran a few sheep as a hobby. Dinah sounded happy there, and I was happy enough. So, bit by bit, we lost touch."

He took another cigarette from his case. "Sometimes the thought of Dinah has gnawed at my conscience, Bunny," he said. "I've felt I ought to get in touch with her. But somehow, knowing she was happy, and that any day my own activities might bring me a frightful purler—somehow, I always felt it'd be kinder to let her lead her own life. You see?"

"The wheel turns," I said. "Now, *she's* taken the initiative."

He nodded. "She's read about my being picked for the M.C.C. team against Australia. See where this letter's addressed? 'c/o M.C.C., Lord's Cricket Ground,' Forwarded from Lord's

to the Albany, from the Albany to here. And she says"—he opened the letter again—"she says: 'I see you're in the England side that's coming here. I do congratulate you. What a pity, though, if you've sailed before I arrive. But no matter, I shall be in London when you return. I'm longing to see what you look like now, and to know all about you and your doings.'" Raffles returned the letter to its envelope. "Me and my doings!" he said wryly.

"She's evidently not coming *specifically* to look you up," I commented.

"By no means," he said. "She seems to be coming to England permanently. I gather that Mr. and Mrs. W. F. are both dead, and that Dinah is coming to London to 'try her fortune.' Poor, naive kid!"

He gazed out unseeingly over the Bay of Naples for a moment. Then, abruptly, he turned to me. "Bunny, we must go to the shipping office, find out whether Dinah's liner touches at Naples here—and if so, when."

Ten minutes later we were in the shipping office, looking blankly at each other. "Of all the foul luck!" I said. "Her liner calls here just three days *after* you'll have sailed."

"To which," he said, "there's only one answer. I don't sail."

I said: "You can't do that, Raffles. You've got to go." Then I added, seeing how distressed he was: "I'll wait for her ship and travel back to England with her, if that would help."

Raffles cheered up at once. "You'd do that, Bunny?" he said. "It's awfully good of you. And I can't think of anyone better for the job. You're the very man to take her in hand."

"You can rely on me implicitly," I assured him.

"One good thing, anyway," Raffles said. "There's no need for my rooms to stand vacant. You can install her in them very snugly." The old vivacity danced in his eyes. "You'll have a Raffles just round the corner at the Albany, after all, Bunny."

"But what a different Raffles!" I said ruefully. "A naive girl!"

Mid-morning on the third day after Raffles departed, I was on the wharf, looking out at the newly arrived liner at anchor and at the incoming tender puffing shoreward, her decks bright with dresses of summery muslin, many parasols, and masculine straw hats. The tender came alongside and the gangway was run out.

In the sweltering confusion, an awful thought struck me. I had secured a booking with no difficulty; but now, as I watched the cargo-slings sway baggage up out of the tender, it occurred to me that Dinah Raffles might have decided to leave the ship here and save herself time by

going on to England overland. Many people did this.

I studied the passengers descending the gangway, obviously bent on sightseeing during the few hours the liner would remain here. Raffles had told me that his sister had "oat-colored plaits," but apart from that I had no clue to her appearance. Yet now, suddenly, my attention was riveted by a girl who appeared at the head of the gangway.

She was a graceful, gray-eyed girl, cool in a dainty dress. She carried a parasol and long gloves in her hand. I could have imagined her and Raffles together, he a bit the taller; they would have looked well, have complemented each other. But if she were indeed Dinah, she no longer had plaits. Her pretty hair, as I saw when she turned her head to speak to someone behind her, was secured at her nape by a neat little bow of black velvet.

That turning of the head made me certain she was Dinah. The clean-cut profile, the smile, these could have belonged to no one, I felt, but Raffles's sister. I watched her as, with a hand to her skirts, she started down the gangway, escorted by a sleekly good-looking, dark-haired fellow in his middle thirties wearing a well-cut gray suit.

Motioning the fellow carrying my portmanteau to follow me, I began to edge my way through the milling crowd. While I was doing so, I saw a trio of vividly clad gipsy girls, with jingling tambourines gather about Dinah as she set foot on the wharf. With a smile, she let one of the girls draw her aside, clear of the gangway and, poring over her palm, gabble forth some stream of nonsense.

"Si, si, e vero, signorina, e vero!" I heard the gipsy girl vociferating, as I drew closer. "One of the protected ones! It is wrote—here in your hand. *Eccolo!* Always I know them—the protected ones! One in a million, *signorina. Vabene,* you'll see, one day—you'll remember!"

"I'm sure I shall," I heard Dinah say, and by her voice alone, so cool, friendly and amused, I should have known her anywhere for a Raffles.

I could not help grinning to myself at the thought that, at that very moment, I, her officially appointed protector, was working my way through the crowd to reach her. But just as I was about to step free, declare myself, and produce the letter of credentials which Raffles had given me, the gray-suited fellow with Dinah tossed the gipsy girl a coin and, putting an arm very familiarly about Dinah's waist, drew her away towards the line of waiting carriages.

The bland possessiveness of

the gesture came as a shock to me. I stood staring. And I heard the man say, "You see, Dinah? One of the protected ones! And did you notice who the girl rolled her eye at when she said it?"

He meant himself, of course; and I was so taken aback that I let them go right by me. It had simply not occurred to either Raffles or myself that Dinah, totally inexperienced and for the first time in her life footloose, might have got mixed up with some man in the course of the voyage.

I watched the chap hand Dinah into one of the carriages, and then I went out in the tender to the liner. Having seen my baggage to my cabin, I went straight to the purser's office in the main deck foyer, where I was lucky enough to get hold of the assistant purser. Oh, yes, he knew Miss Raffles very well. The man who had taken her ashore? He was a Mr. Graham Forbes, of a wealthy English family long settled in the Argentine. It appeared that Forbes had been in Australia studying sheep-farming methods with a view to experimenting with sheep on his Argentine properties.

"Going to England, is he?" I asked.

"Only as far as Lisbon. He gets a ship there for Rio and the River Plate."

"He became acquainted with Miss Raffles on board?" I inquired. And then, seeing that the assistant purser was beginning to look askance at my questions, I took him into my confidence. "I'm a close friend of Miss Raffles's brother. He's unable to meet her himself and he's appointed me a sort of brother by proxy. Though I don't know her personally yet, I have a responsibility. From what I saw of Forbes's manner to her on the wharf just now, I sensed—well, a possible entanglement."

The assistant purser nodded. "He met her on board here, and made a dead set at her from the start." He looked at me strangely. "Seeing how you're placed, Mr. Manders, I'd better be open with you. I may tell you it's just as well you've shown up. Forbes keeps it very dark when he's traveling, but I happen to know he's a married man—got a nice, pretty little *señora* in the Argentine."

I compressed my lips.

"There's worse to come," the assistant purser said grimly. "I was on the River Plate run once. I know all about this Graham Forbes. He's a charmer. He can tell the tale. More than one pretty girl traveling alone—well, I've heard stories. As a matter of fact, I've heard one right in this ship—from a pretty youngster called Mary Moore, down in Third Class."

Frowning, he filled his pipe. "She came to me one day, aboard

here," he said, "and told me she'd noticed that a certain girl who was young and traveling alone—she meant Miss Raffles—seemed to be in danger of losing her head over Forbes.

"Miss Moore told me that she herself had met Forbes some months ago, in a ship going out to Australia. She was going to Australia to get married. Unfortunately, she fell in love with Forbes, and she let him talk her into breaking it off with the man she was going to marry, and running off with Forbes, instead. That's his line, Mr. Manders. I know.

"Quite by chance, Mary Moore learned he was already married and had been lying to her. She taxed him with it. When he saw she had his number, he just left her—flat.

"That girl's been badly hurt, Mr. Manders. She has too much pride to go back to the man she'd broken off with. She worked to earn her fare back to England, and she's returning unhappy and virtually penniless."

"Does Forbes know she's in this ship?" I asked.

"He doesn't dream it," said the assistant purser. "And Miss Moore didn't dream Forbes was aboard, either, till she happened —from the third-class deck for'ard—to spot him up on the promenade deck with Miss Raffles. After that, she kept her eyes open, and she saw Forbes and Miss Raffles together so many times that finally she came to me and told me Miss Raffles ought to be warned that Forbes is a bad lot.

"I told Miss Raffles and suggested she have a talk with Mary Moore. Whether she did or not, I don't know. She's still going about with Forbes, so I doubt it. Mr. Manders, it's as well you've shown up, but I don't envy you. You've got a situation on your hands."

Helpfully, he saw to it that I got a place at the same table as Dinah and Forbes in the dining-saloon when they returned from their day out. The tables were long ones, seating twenty a side. Watching the couple at dinner that evening, soon after we sailed, I saw that Forbes monopolized Dinah completely; his jealousy was glaring.

I wanted to get Dinah alone, to introduce myself. But as I watched Forbes escort her from the saloon, it was obvious that I stood a poor hope of getting her alone. So I went to the smoking-saloon to write her a note.

A poker school was in session there, with a gray-haired, hard-faced man running in luck by the look of it. I sat down at a table nearby and, calling for writing materials, wrote my note to Dinah, saying I looked forward to a private talk with her

as soon as she could make it convenient. Sealing the note, together with Raffles's letter, into an envelope, I dispatched a steward to hand it to Miss Raffles's cabin steward with instructions to see that she got it as soon as she went below.

I had a few brandies and watched the poker game for a while, then went down to my cabin. I turned up the light to undress, climbed into my bunk, turned the light down to a blue speck in the dark. Lulled by the muted throb of the engines, I soon—despite my perplexities—fell asleep.

How long I slept, or what awakened me, I did not know, but suddenly my eyes were wide open. Through the porthole, I could see a scatter of distant stars. I was listening intently. There was the deep beat of the engines, the hiss and slur of the sliding water, the slight vibration of a tooth-glass in its bracket. No other sound. Tension was beginning to relax in me when a silent, hooded shadow blotted out the porthole and the stars, and remained there—motionless.

My heart gave a great thump. "Who's there?" I said hoarsely.

I heaved myself up on an elbow, turned up the blue speck of the lamp. The light bloomed, dazzling me. I put up an arm to shade my eyes.

Standing near the foot of the bunk was a figure wearing a hooded cape of deep blue velvet. "You wanted to talk to me privately?" a voice whispered. Slim hands reached up to put back the hood. I saw a girl's face, clean-cut as a cameo. Clear gray eyes, dark-lashed, looked at me levelly. "You're my brother's friend. So I came as soon as I could—Bunny," said Dinah.

I gaped at her. I felt as if I were dreaming. "But, Miss Raffles!" I said. "Dinah! To come here! To my cabin! I didn't mean—"

"Oh, I know," she said. "But where else could we meet privately? There's somebody — a Graham Forbes—I have a reason for not wanting him to know about you. Where else but here could we meet without his getting to hear of it? On ships, everyone gets to hear everything."

"What of it?" I said. "Forbes or no Forbes, you've evidently read your brother's letter; you know I'm his closest friend—"

"Which would be enough," she said, "to make Graham quite wildly jealous. He's like that, Bunny, and I don't want to—upset him."

"Dinah," I said dryly, "I begin to think my dropping on you out of a clear sky must seem an unwelcome complication."

"Oh, don't say that, Bunny," she said, but she gave me an unfathomable look.

I remembered that I was sit-

ting up in my bunk clad only in my nightclothes. I reached out for my smoking-jacket and donned it. "This is hardly the time or place I had in mind for our talk," I said, "but since you've chosen it—won't you sit down?"

"Thank you, Bunny," she said, and, drawing her cape about her, she seated herself on the one small upholstered stool. Her clear gray eyes met mine. Her brows, a shade darker than her hair, subtly reminded me of A. J.'s.

"Dinah," I said, "did Raffles make any recommendations in his letter?"

She hesitated. Then she said: "He told me that he would like me to be guided by you in all respects."

"And how do you feel about that Dinah?" I asked.

"Why, of course, Bunny," she said. "I shall be very happy to be guided by you."

It was my cue to get to grips with the Graham Forbes entanglement. I told her what the assistant purser, in view of my status as brother-by-proxy, very properly had seen fit to confide in me about Graham Forbes. I mentioned the unfortunate Mary Moore and rather cruelly rubbed in the sufferings Forbes's unfortunate wife must endure. I pulled out all the stops.

Dinah, sitting on the stool, chin propped on her palm, never took her eyes off me. I waited for her to speak. Had I seen tears in her eyes, I should have been embarrassed but, taking them to be a sign that I had impressed her, not ungratified. Instead, gazing at me meditatively, she put a hand to some pocket in the silken lining of her cape and drew out a little gold comfit box. Opening it, disclosing some small squares of Turkish Delight, she offered it to me absently. "Sweet, Bunny?" she said.

I was dumbfounded. To the very life, it was the gesture with which countless times I had seen A. J. Raffles, when deep in thought and having heard scarcely a word of some theory or protest I had been earnestly advancing, take out his cigarette-case and offer me a Sullivan, saying absently: "Smoke, Bunny?"

I shook my head, and Dinah, gazing into space, nibbled meditatively at a piece of Turkish Delight. "Bunny," she said, at last, "I feel sure there's a great deal in what you say. Perhaps I've been very silly. If I tell you that I shall be happy to be guided by you in *principle,* and make a clean break from Graham, will you be happy if I handle the *detail* of it in my own way?"

My spirits rose. "But of course," I assured her. "After all, the matter's highly personal."

"Then will you please," she

said, "promise to behave for the present just as though you don't know me at all? That's just part of the detail, Bunny. In principle, I'm being guided by you."

"In that case," I said, suddenly feeling hugely relieved, "I promise willingly."

She gave me a grateful look and, rising, drew up her hood, preparatory to departure. "What a wonderful talk we've had!" she said. "And we're friends now, aren't we? I'm so glad. Good night—Bunny."

"Good night, Dinah," I said. "God bless you."

She opened the door a crack, peered out along the corridor, smiled at me once, most sweetly, then was gone. I expelled a long breath of relief and satisfaction and, well pleased with the progress I had made, was just leaning back against the pillows when I remembered the disturbing manner in which Dinah had got in touch with me. The belated thought struck me that I ought really to assure myself that she got back safely to her cabin, one never knowing what inebriates from the smoking-saloon might be reeling and grimacing about the companionways of a liner at night.

I pulled on my trousers hastily and stepped out into the corridor just in time to see Dinah turn the corner into one of the main corridors running fore and aft. I followed.

The wider corridor, along which Dinah's slim, hooded figure was hurrying, was lighted by dim safety-lamps spaced at wide intervals. For'ard, where the corridor opened into a small foyer, I saw her pause to reconnoitre the foyer before crossing it.

Not wishing, if seen, to appear to be dogging her, I, too, paused to reconnoitre the foyer before crossing it. And I saw fall across it a man's shadow, queerly slanted. I peered up obliquely to my right and saw a man standing on the companion stairs, craning far over the banister to look along the corridor after Dinah.

Suddenly he darted down the stairs, across the foyer, and, flattening himself against the wall, watched Dinah round the angle of it.

Some way along the corridor, Dinah opened a cabin door and went in. Instantly, the watcher across the foyer walked forward along the corridor and paused outside Dinah's cabin. He seemed to verify the number on the door, then turned and came walking back to the foyer.

I, too, stepped into the foyer. I was angry and disturbed. I had half a mind to accost and question the man, but I feared it might start an altercation which would involve Dinah in scandal. I just took a good look at the chap as we passed in the foyer,

and gave him a perfunctory, "'Night."

"'Night to you," he replied.

He was the lean, gray-haired, hard-looking customer who had been raking in the chips at poker in the smoking-saloon. I realized he must have been coming down from a late sitting when he had spotted Dinah. He looked dangerous to me, and I did not like the slight, grim smile on his face.

I returned to my own cabin mystified and uneasy. During the long weeks of the voyage from Australia, Dinah seemed to have become involved not only with one, but with two men. She was beginning to seem something of a riddle to me. What the truth was, I could not imagine.

By a bit of luck, the first person I saw when I went on deck early next morning was my friend the assistant purser. He was strolling up and down smoking a before-breakfast pipe, and I fell in with him, for I wanted to ask him about the gray-haired poker-player.

But before I could do so, and as we reached the for'ard rail and were about to turn to retrace our leisurely steps aft, the assistant purser paused. "There she is," he said. "Girl I told you about, Mr. Manders. Mary Moore."

The deck below was thronged with third-class saloon passengers. Standing alone by the capstan right up in the bows was a slender, dark-haired girl.

"I'm sorry for that kid," the assistant purser said grimly. "Look at her there. Probably thinking of what lies ahead of her at the end of this voyage. No money, no job, a London winter. Pretty different from the prospect she was going out to. Just one little mistake—listening to a smooth charmer like Forbes—and there she is. Not a prospect in the world." He shook his head. "And you can't tell 'em."

As we turned to retrace our steps aft, the gray-haired poker-player stepped out on the deck in front of us. He wore a white pongee suit. He walked across to lean with folded arms on the rail.

"Who's that party?" I muttered.

"Now, there's another," said the assistant purser. "His name's Ben Galley. He's a card-sharper. I know it but can't prove it. Heaven knows I've dropped enough hints to passengers not to play with him, but it's a waste of breath. They won't be told, Mr. Manders."

"Have you noticed him show any interest in Miss Raffles?" I asked uneasily.

"Come to think of it," he said, "he tried damned hard to ingratiate himself both with her and with Forbes. Forbes cold-shouldered him, having no interest in

anyone but Miss Raffles. What made you ask, Mr. Manders?"

But I nudged him. Dinah and Forbes had come out on deck just ahead. Extraordinary girl! She looked as cool, as fresh, as limpid as the morning. She gave the assistant purser a reserved, charming smile, but her gray eyes committed upon myself an act of cool oblivion. . . .

That night I was leaning gloomily on the rail of the boat-deck when I heard the approach of idling footsteps, and a voice murmured, "One of the protected ones—"

I glanced over my shoulder, to see the shadowy forms of Dinah and Forbes, arm in arm, strolling by.

"Remember, Dinah?" Forbes was saying. "The gipsy girl at Naples? You're alone in the world, my dear. What is there for you in London but disappointment and heartbreak? Confound it, Dinah—" his tone grew ardent, urgent—"why not sail with me from Lisbon? I can make you in sober fact, if you choose, 'one of the protected ones' of this world. I have the means, Dinah, you know it. There's nothing I can't give you."

His lying voice faded as they passed. I was burning with rage, but I had promised Dinah to let her handle the detail of her break with him in her own way, and I was about to step out and beat a retreat when here they came again, strolling back past me, and I heard Forbes saying earnestly: "But of course! What else? Of course I'm talking of marriage—"

"It's impossible, Graham," I heard Dinah say. "It's quite impossible."

"But why, Dinah? Why?"

I waited with relish for her to give it to him straight from the shoulder that she knew very well he already had a wife. Instead, she said, "Because the real reason I'm going to London, Graham, is—to be married."

I wondered if I had heard aright. I was utterly bewildered.

"Oh," I heard her say, "I know I ought to have told you long ago, Graham—right at the beginning of our—our—what I thought was our mere flirtation. I feel so ashamed, now."

"Confound it," Forbes said, "who are you going to marry?"

They had paused. "Does it matter?" she said, rather listlessly. "*I* call him Bunny."

At this, I wondered if my hearing or merely my reason were deserting me.

"You don't love him," Forbes said violently. "You love me, Dinah, and you're coming with me. Forget London. Forget him—this Bunny—"

"It's not so simple, Graham," she said. "I promised. I gave him my word. He's waiting there

in London for me. It's all arranged—"

Suddenly enlightenment flashed upon me. She *was* making her break. She would not tell him she knew that he was trying to deceive her, that he already had a wife. No, she was punishing him, instead, where it would hurt most, in his jealous possessiveness. There was another man waiting for her. . . .

"To hell with him!" Forbes said. "Dinah, send him a cable from Marseilles tomorrow."

"I can't, Graham. It's out of the question. Don't ask me. I owe so much to Bunny. I'm so deeply committed, so much in his debt. My fare to England, my bills in Australia that he arranged for his solicitors to settle up for me. Oh, I *can't* desert him, Graham. Truly, it's unthinkable. I. . . ." Then they passed from my view.

In Marseilles harbor next morning, as I shaved, still thinking about this, a knock sounded on my door. A steward entered, handed me a note. I motioned him to wait and, all lathered as I was, tore open the envelope.

The note was from Dinah:

Dear Bunny,

The ship sails again at six this evening. I am so glad to have been guided by you, and I am making a clean break, as you so wisely advise. So as to make it *quite* irrevocable, I have made up my mind to leave the ship altogether, here at Marseilles.

I think I must have the same feeling as A. J., who says in his letter to me that there are times when he simply doesn't know what he would do without you. For, Bunny—may I count on your escort overland to London? If so, perhaps you would be so very kind as to book a room for me, just for tonight, at the Hôtel du Monde here, in the rue de la Canibière, and meet me there some time during the afternoon?

My brother, in his letter, tells me that I can always "confidentially count on Bunny"—and indeed, I am doing so.

Your affectionate friend,

DINAH RAFFLES.

This was highly satisfactory to me and, thinking I would scribble her a line to assure her of my compliance with her wishes, I asked the steward: "Is Miss Raffles in her cabin?"

"No, sir," he said. "She went ashore about ten minutes ago."

"Indeed?" I said, surprised. "With her luggage?"

"Oh, no, sir," said the steward. "Just sightseeing. She went with Mr. Forbes."

The day darkened for me. I could see no sense in this. If she

had made her break with Forbes, what rhyme or reason was there in waltzing off on another shore excursion with the man?

At all events, there was nothing for it but to pack my traps and go to the Hôtel du Monde on the sweltering Canibière, crowded with carriages, thundering drays and clanging little yellow two-horse tramcars. I reserved her a room; and, in deference to the conventions, I conveyed my own traps to another hotel nearby.

Here I had a surprise, for, as I entered, I saw a slender, dark-haired girl, pretty but with a worried, preoccupied expression, just turning away from the desk, with a pageboy carrying her valises. I thought I recognized her; and, sure enough, on my signing the register, I saw that the last entry was "Mary Moore —British."

I lunched on *bouillabaisse* and at two o'clock went to the Hôtel du Monde. It looked to me a very average kind of fleabag, but I sat waiting in its dim foyer until well past five.

Then an appalling suspicion began to shape in my mind. Suppose that in the end Dinah had had the reckless folly to yield to Forbes's persuasions? Suppose her note to me had been a trick designed to rid herself of a hampering complication? Suppose her object was *to leave me behind?*

The idea sent a hot wave of panic over me. I snatched out my watch. I sprang to my feet. It was just on six. Sailing time! At that very moment, the deep siren-boom of a departing liner sounded to me across the flat rooftops of this alien city. I stood there stunned.

Then the bead curtain hanging in the street doorway was swept aside—and Dinah Raffles walked in.

She was followed by a cabman carrying her portmanteaux. In her cool, composed way, Dinah glanced round the foyer. She saw me standing there staring, and she came to me, smiling, and gave me her hand.

"I see A. J. was right," she said, "when he told me to count on you. Will you see me to my room, please, Bunny? I have something to say to you."

The porter carried her luggage upstairs, and unlocked the door of Dinah's room. I was too relieved by her arrival to take issue with her incorrigible disregard of normal convention. I tipped the porter heavily and explained to him that I had news from England to discuss with the lady. I was embarrassed by the inimitably Gallic look he gave me; but this was Marseilles, and he left us without demur, closing the door behind him.

I turned to Dinah. In the dim, hot room, with its closed shutters, she made a cool and grace-

ful figure, not a hair of her fair head out of place, the tiny black velvet bow neat at her nape.

I moved to throw open the shutters, but she stayed me with a light hand on my arm. "Not just yet, Bunny," she said, and she smiled. "I've been guided so wonderfully by you, and I've made a *clean break* just as you advised—but there's a tiny little complication come up. Do you think that presently, just for a few seconds, you could manage to look thoroughly grim and formidable?"

As she asked this surprising question, she was unstrapping one of her portmanteaux. She raised the lid, took out something that jingled.

"When I was a small girl—oh, eleven, twelve, thirteen, Bunny," she said, "I used to go about with my poor old guardian, W. F. Raffles, on his bank-inspecting rounds. It was lonely for him, driving his horse-and-trap all by himself, so I often went along. Because of the possibility of bushrangers he always went armed—and he carried these things, too. I kept them as a memento of him, for I loved him dearly. I never dreamed they'd come in useful one day."

She turned to me, holding, of all things, a pair of handcuffs. Before I realized what she was about, she snapped one cuff on to my left wrist and the other on to her own right wrist. Lightly but firmly, she steered me to a position behind one of the window curtains.

"There, that's splendid, Bunny," she said. "Don't make a sound till I give a little twitch on the handcuffs, then just step out, looking grim, and with your right hand in your pocket, and say harshly, 'Right! That's enough!' You see? And now I stand with my back to the curtain edge, looking toward the door—like this, you see—and my right hand a bit behind me, so that the handcuff won't be seen. There, now we're just right. All we have to do is wait."

In all my felonious experience with A. J. Raffles, never had I known the like of this with his sister Dinah. The dim, hot room was still. The pulse throbbed a measured beat in my temples.

Suddenly I became aware of footsteps approaching along the landing. Steady, unhurried, somehow sinister, on they came. They stopped. On the door of the room fell three distinct, deliberate knocks.

"Entrez," Dinah called in her clear voice.

I heard the door open slowly, close slowly. I chewed my lip. In the room, silence stretched interminably. Then a man's flat voice said: "Frightened, Miss Raffles? You look kind of frightened, standing there."

Dinah did not speak, did not stir. A bead of sweat trickled down my face.

"Nothing to say?" said the man. "Beauty and brains *and* a still tongue? You're a wonder. Honest, I mean it, I really do. Mind if I light a cheroot? I've had sort of a hard day—following Miss Raffles and Mr. Forbes around Marseilles."

I peered down at Dinah's manacled hand. It was perfectly still but tightly clenched, the knuckles white. I heard the scrape of a match, caught a whiff of smoke.

"Did you know," said the man's voice, "that I'd marked Forbes as my meat within a few days of our sailing from Sydney? I reckoned to relieve him of some of his excess funds—at poker. Could I get him in a game? Not a hope! All he had time for was a slip of a girl with fair hair and a bit of black velvet ribbon in it. Kind of lady-like and elegant. Lady born, in fact. That's what she seemed to me, at any rate. Until I discovered that she'd suddenly taken to slipping down to the third class, very clandestine, to talk to a girl down there called Marty Moore. Now, what did that mean?"

He chuckled.

"I couldn't find out," he said. "But just last night I had a bit of luck. Spotted you and Forbes right up for'ard on the boat-deck. It was nice and dark, and I got close enough to hear a thing or two. Very interesting! I heard Forbes begging and imploring you to let him give you fifteen hundred pounds to pay off an indebtedness you reckoned you'd incurred to some man in London—an obligation that, you felt, compelled you to keep a promise to marry him."

A bead of sweat trickled down my face. I realized that Ben Galley must have overheard the continuation of the conversation of which I had heard the beginning.

"Forbes wanted you to run away with him," said Galley. "But no, you felt too bound and beholden to the man in London. Only, somehow, in the end you kind of let Forbes talk you round. Didn't you?

"Only, Ben Galley—Ben was curious to know more about all this. So he followed you and Forbes ashore today. Off you went in a victoria to the Credit Lyonnais, where he drew fifteen hundred pounds, in hundred-pound notes, on a letter of credit —to square the debt to the would-be bridegroom in London.

"Then off to the Post and Telegraphs and, while he waits in the victoria, in you go—to seal the notes into an official registration envelope and send it off insured, with a line to tell the poor fellow in London he'd lost you.

"But did you in fact send off

that money? Not you! You came out with that money still in your purse, and off you went with Forbes on a day's sightseeing, with poor Ben Galley following along. Eh?"

He laughed aloud.

"And then what?" he asked. "Why, you got back to the ship, all hot and done up from sightseeing, and you both went down to your cabins for a nice leisurely bath and change before the dinner bugle went. But what happens? Five minutes later, up on deck you come, with a steward carrying your baggage. And you quit the ship for keeps, just as they're getting ready to remove the gangway for sailing."

A tramcar's bell clanged sharply under the window.

"And when he realizes what's happened," said Ben Galley, "he'll keep very, very mum, will the rich irresistible Mr. Forbes, because this is the story he wouldn't like his wife in the Argentine to hear about.

"And so here's Ben, Miss Raffles. When I saw you nip down the gangway, baggage and all, I wasn't far behind—baggage and all. I followed you here. Didn't expect that, did you?"

He was wrong, I knew. Dinah had known.

"I've got a proposition," said Galley. "I can't imagine where in the world you got that 'waiting bridegroom' story, but it has possibilities. With your looks and that fairy-tale and my poker, we can make a tidy pile, you and me, traveling the world. In partnership. Me the senior partner and banker. *And* banker, Miss Raffles! So just fork over the fifteen hundred, for a start. Let's have the money, dear."

Dinah did not stir, did not say a word. My heart thumped. All the time, the light filtering between the slats of the shutters was fading.

"Stubborn?" said Ben Galley. "Clever girl like you?" Into his voice crept an uglier, a colder note. "You know better than that, surely—a girl with your gifts. Have you forgotten where you are? Marseilles, my dear! La Canibière, my dear! Do you know their reputation? You've been clever, you've taken risks, but you've maneuvered yourself into kind of a nasty corner, d'you know? Strange things can happen in Marseilles to young ladies who take risks, Miss Dinah Raffles."

I felt a twitch of the handcuff at my wrist. Instantly, with my right hand jammed forward in my pocket, I stepped out sharply from behind the curtain. "Right!" I said. "That's enough."

Dinah, looking at Ben Galley, gave a slight shrug and lifted her hand so that he could not fail to see that she was handcuffed to me. The effect upon

Galley was electrifying. He took just one horrified look at the handcuffs, then spun round, yanked open the door, slammed it behind him. The sound of his running footsteps receded rapidly along the landing.

"Bunny!" said Dinah. Her voice shook. "Oh, Bunny! Bunny, you make a wonderful detective. He thinks he talked too much, and he won't stop running for a month."

She was laughing. Yet, in the twilit room, I had an impression that there was a tremor in her mirth. She had outwitted Galley. Without one word, by the simple gesture of lifting her hand so that he saw the handcuffs, she had outwitted him. Yet I knew intuitively that she had been terrified of the man, for she was only a girl, after all—a young and human girl. And somehow, my unfettered arm was about her slim shoulders, patting them, seeking to comfort her, to soothe her.

"Dinah, my dear—" I was profoundly shaken by what I had heard. "The risks you've run—"

"But I had to, Bunny," she said, "because of the ribbon shop."

"Ribbon shop?" I said blankly.

"Mary Moore's ribbon shop," said Dinah. "You see, I was quite ready to be friends with Graham Forbes at first. I quite liked him. But when the assistant purser spoke to me about him, and when I slipped down and talked to Mary, and heard how Forbes had lied to her and cheated her, I was furious.

"And I was worried about Mary because she seemed so sort of broken, no heart for anything, and nothing to go to, and no money, and I was afraid of what might become of her. So I asked her if she would like to have a little ribbon shop, and she said she would. Well, it seemed to me, Bunny, that the very least Forbes owed her was a little ribbon shop. Don't you agree?"

"Dinah," I said, amazed, "I—"

"But Mary's so proud," said Dinah. "I knew she'd never take the money for it, if she thought it came from Forbes. So I just told her I had some business in Marseilles and that, if she'd just go ashore and wait for me at the nearest hotel to the Hôtel du Monde, I'd call for her in the evening with my London solicitor, who was meeting me here —I meant you, of course, Bunny —and who'd easily arrange for some money for the ribbon shop, and then we'd all go on to London together by train.

"Bunny, do you think Forbes's fifteen hundred will be enough for a little ribbon shop?"

"Dinah," I said, with a thickness in my throat. "I don't know anything about ribbon shops. But, Dinah, don't you realize? If you had been alone, in Mar-

seilles—with that man Galley."

"But I wasn't alone, Bunny," she said. "I knew I could count on you—my brother's friend, A. J.'s friend! I knew I had *you* to protect me."

She was so close. I breathed the fern fragrance of her perfume. With my arm about her, my clumsy fingers touched the velvet of the little bow at her nape. The dim light filtering through the slats of the shutters made a pallor of her face. Her eyes shone like stars. Her lips, so close to mine, were smiling.

"One of the protected ones," she whispered. "A gipsy girl called me that, Bunny. And it's so *true*." I felt her cool fingers cup my hot cheek for an instant, light as moths. "So very true, my dear friend — Bunny," she breathed.

Then in a flash, to my bewilderment, she thrust me from her, and from the belt at her waist plucked out the key of the handcuffs. In a moment, she had them unlocked, and was all in a bustle for us to collect Mary and leave Marseilles at once, this very night, on the train for Paris.

Still dazed by what had happened, I went to the door and called the porter to help with the portmanteaux. A minute or so later Dinah and I were on our way to pick up Mary.

Dinah reached across to me in the shadowy interior of the vehicle. She tucked an envelope into my walletpocket and gave the pocket a little pat.

"Of course, it must be *you* who produces the money when we've helped Mary find her little ribbon shop," she said. "I want *you* to be banker, Bunny. I want always to have *you* to guide me and advise me and think for me and protect me, just as A. J. said you would, and as you've already done so wonderfully. And, Bunny—"

"Yes, Dinah?" I asked.

We had stopped outside Mary's hotel. "Do you think that perhaps we'd better not tell my brother anything about all this? A. J. mightn't understand, perhaps."

"Well, now, Dinah," I said slowly, "as to that, do you know —I really think he might."

As I walked down the gaslit street of this enigmatic city of Marseilles and walked into the hotel to collect Miss Moore, I was thinking deeply of the responsibility on my hands in the months ahead. A. J. would be far away playing cricket in Australia, but, occupying his familiar rooms in the Albany, there would be another Raffles—the female of the species.

the treasure of turk's lane

by . . . Leslie Charteris

The Saint in those days took an interest in everything that went on in London. This was often quite rewarding.

THERE was a morning when Simon Templar looked up from his newspaper with a twinkle of unholy meditation in his blue eyes and a rather thoughtful smile barely touching the corners of his mouth; and to the privileged few who shared all his lawless moods there was only one deduction to be drawn when the Saint looked up from his newspaper in just that thoughtful and unholy way.

"I see that Vernon Winlass has bought Turk's Lane," he said.

Mr. Vernon Winlass was a man who believed in Getting Things Done. The manner of doing them did not concern him much, so long as it remained strictly within the law; it was only results which could be seen in bank accounts, share holdings, income tax returns, and the material circumstances of luxurious living, and with these things Mr. Winlass was very greatly and wholeheartedly concerned.

This is not to say that he was more avaricious than any other business man, or more unscrupulous than any other financier.

While Simon Templar and Mr. Vernon Winlass both believed in getting things done, there the similarity ended—as Mr. Winlass was to discover.

From: THE SAINT INTERVENES
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In his philosophy, the weakest went to the wall: the careless, the timid, the foolish, the simple, the hesitant, paid with their misfortunes for the rewards that came naturally to those of sharper and more aggressive talents.

And in setting up that elementary principle for his only guiding standard, Mr. Winlass could justifiably claim that after all he was only demonstrating himself to be the perfect evolutionary product of a civilization whose honors and amenities are given only to people who Get Things Done, whether they are worth doing or not—with the notable exception of politicians, who, of course, are exempted by election even from that requirement.

Simon Templar did not like Mr. Winlass, and would have considered him a legitimate victim for his illegitimate talents, on general principles that were only loosely connected with one or two things he had heard about Mr. Winlass's methods of Getting Things Done; but although the idea of devoting some time and attention to that hard-headed financier simmered at the back of his mind in a pleasant warmth of enthusiasm, it did not actually boil over until the end of the same week, when he happened to be passing Turk's Lane on his return from another business affair.

Turk's Lane is, or was, a narrow cul-de-sac of small two-storey cottages. That description is more or less as bald and unimaginative as anything a hard-headed financier would have found to say about it. In actual fact it was one of those curious relics of the past which may sometimes be discovered in London, submerged among tall modern buildings and ordered squares as if a new century had grown up around it without noticing its existence any more than was necessary to avoid treading on it.

The passer-by who wandered into that dark lane at night might have fancied himself magically transported back over two centuries. He would have seen the low ceilings and tiny leaded windows of oak-beamed houses, the wrought-iron lamps glowing above the lintels of the narrow doors, the worn cobblestones gleaming underfoot, the naphtha flares flickering on a riot of foodstuffs spread out in unglazed shop fronts; and he might have thought himself spirited away into the market street of a village that had survived there unaltered from the days when Kensington was a hamlet three miles from London and there was a real Knights' Bridge across the Serpentine where it now flows through sanitary drainpipes to the Thames.

Mr. Winlass did not think any of these things; but he saw something far more interesting to

himself, which was that Turk's Lane stood at the back of a short row of shabby early Victorian houses, which were for sale. He also saw that the whole of Turk's Lane—except for the two end houses, which were the freehold property of the occupants—was likewise for sale, and that the block comprised of these two principal properties totalled an area of about three-quarters of an acre, which is quite a small garden in the country, but which would allow plenty of space to erect a block of modern apartments with running hot and cold water in every room for the tenancy of fifty more sophisticated and highly civilized Londoners.

He also saw that this projected building would have an impressive frontage on a most respectable road in a convenient situation which the westward trend of expansion was annually raising in value; and he bought the row of shabby early Victorian houses and the whole of Turk's Lane except the two end cottages, and called in his architects.

Those two cottages which had not been included in the purchase were the difficulty.

"If you don't get those two places the site's useless," Mr. Winlass was told. "You can't build a block of flats like you're proposing to put up with two old cottages in the middle."

"Leave it to me," said Mr. Winlass. "I'll Get It Done."

Strolling into Turk's Lane on this day when the ripeness of Mr. Winlass for the slaughter was finally made plain to him, Simon Templar learned how it was Getting Done.

It was not by any means the Saint's first visit to that picturesque little alley. He had an open affection for it, as he had for all such pathetic rearguards of the forlorn fight against dull mechanical modernity; and he had at least one friend who lived there.

Dave Roberts was a cobbler. He was an old gray-haired man with gentle gray eyes, known to every inhabitant of Turk's Lane as "Uncle Dave," who had plied his trade there since the oldest of them could remember, as his father and grandfather had done before him. It might almost be said that he *was* Turk's Lane, so wholly did he belong to the forgotten days that were preserved there. The march of progress to which Mr. Vernon Winlass belonged had passed him by.

He sat in his tiny shop and mended the boots and shoes of the neighborhood for microscopical old-world prices; he had a happy smile and a kind word for everyone; and with those simple things, unlike Mr. Vernon Winlass, his philosophy began and ended and was well

content. To such pioneers as Mr. Winlass he was, of course, a dull reactionary and a stupid bumpkin; but to the Saint he was one of the few and dwindling relics of happier and cleaner days, and many pairs of Simon's own expensive shoes had gone to his door out of that queer affection rather than because they needed repairing.

Simon smoked a cigarette under the low beamed ceiling in the smell of leather and wax, while Dave Roberts wielded his awl under a flickering gas-jet and told him of the things that were happening in Turk's Lane.

"Ay, sir, Tom Unwin over the road, he's going. Mr. Winlass put him out o' business. Did you see that new shop next to Tom's? Mr. Winlass started that up, soon as he'd got the tenants out. Sold exactly the same things as Tom had in his shop for a quarter the price—practically give 'em away, he did. 'Course, he lost money all the time, but he can afford to. Tom ain't hardly done a bit o' business since then. 'Well,' Tom says to himself, 'if this goes on for another couple o' months I'll be broke,' so in the end he sells out to Mr. Winlass, an' glad to do it. I suppose I'll be the next, but Mr. Winlass won't get me out if I can help it."

The Saint looked across the lane at the garish makeshift shopfront next door to Tom Unwin's store, and back again to the gentle old man straining his eyes under the feeble light.

"So he's been after you, has he?" he said.

"Ay, he's been after me. One of his men come in my shop the other day. 'Your place is worth five hundred pounds,' he says. 'We'll give you seven hundred to get out at once, an' Mr. Winlass is being very generous with you,' he says. Well, I told him I didn't want to get out. I been here, man an' boy, for seventy years now, an' I wasn't going to get out to suit him. 'You realize,' he says, 'your obstinacy is holding up an important an' valuable piece of building?' — 'Begging your pardon, sir,' I says, 'you're holding me up from mending these shoes.'—'Very well,' this chap says, 'if you're so stupid you can refuse two hundred pounds more than your place is worth, you're going to be glad to take two hundred less before you're much older, if you don't come to your senses quick,' he says, 'and them's Mr. Winlass's orders,' he says."

"I get it," said the Saint quietly. "And in a day or two you'll have a Winlass shoe repair shop next door to you, working for nothing."

"They won't do work like I do," said Dave Roberts stolidly. "You can't do it, not with these machines. What did the Good Lord give us hands for, if it

wasn't that they were the best tools in the world? . . . But I wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Winlass tried it. But I wouldn't sell my house to him. I told this fellow he sent to see me: 'My compliments to Mr. Winlass,' I says, 'and I don't think much of his orders, nor the manners of anybody that carries 'em out. The way you talk to me,' I says, 'isn't the way to talk to any self-respecting man, an' I wouldn't sell you my house, not now after you've threatened me that way,' I says, 'not if you offered me seven thousand pounds.' An' I tells him to get out o' my shop an' take that message to Mr. Winlass."

"I see," said the Saint.

Dave Roberts finished off his sewing and put the shoe down in its place among the row of other finished jobs.

"I ain't afraid, sir," he said. "If it's the Lord's will that I go out of my house, I suppose He knows best. But I don't want Mr. Winlass to have it, an' the Lord helps them that helps themselves."

The Saint lighted a cigarette and stared out of the window.

"Uncle Dave," he said gently, "would you sell me your house?"

He turned round suddenly, and looked at the old man. Dave Roberts's hands had fallen limply in his lap, and his eyes were blinking mistily.

"You, sir?" he said.

"Me," said the Saint. "I know you don't want to go, and I don't know whether it's the Lord's will or not, but I know that you're going to have to. And you know it too. Winlass will find a way to get you out. But I can get more out of him than you could. I know you don't want money, but I can offer you something even better. I know a village out of London where I can buy you a house almost exactly like this, and you can have your shop and do your work there without anybody troubling you again. I'll give you that in exchange, and however much money there is in this house as well."

It was one of those quixotic impulses that often moved him, and he uttered it on the spur of the moment with no concrete plan of campaign in his mind. He knew that Dave Roberts would have to go, and that Turk's Lane must disappear, making room for the hygienic edifice of mass-production cubicles which Mr. Vernon Winlass had planned. He knew that, whatever he himself might wish, that individual little backwater must take the way of all such pleasant places, to be superseded by the vast white cube of Crescent Court, the communal sty which the march of progress demands for its armies. But he also knew that Mr. Vernon Winlass was going to pay more than

seven hundred pounds to clear the ground for it.

When he saw Patricia Holm and Peter Quentin later that night, they had no chance to mistake the light of unlawful resolution on his face.

"Brother Vernon hasn't bought the whole of Turk's Lane," he announced, "because I've got some of it."

"Whatever for?" asked Patricia.

"For an investment," answered the Saint virtuously. "Crescent Court will be built only by kind permission of Mr. Simon Templar, and my permission is going to cost money."

Peter Quentin helped himself to some Peter Dawson.

"We believe you," he said dryly. "What's the swindle?"

"You have a mind like Claud Eustace Teal," said the Saint offensively. "There is no swindle. I am a respectable real estate speculator, and if you had any money I'd sue you for slander. But I don't mind telling you that I am rather interested to know what hobby Vernon Winlass has in his spare moments. Go out and do some sleuthing for me in the morning, Peter, and I'll let you know some more."

In assuming that even such a hard-headed business man as Mr. Vernon Winlass must have some simple indulgence, Simon Templar was not taking a long chance. Throughout the ages, iron-gutted captains of industry had diverted themselves with rare porcelain, pewter, tram tickets, Venetian glass, first editions, second mortgages, second establishments, dahlias, stuffeds owls, and such-like curios. Mr. Wallington Titus Oates, of precious memory, went into slavering raptures at the sight of pieces of perforated paper bearing the portraits of stuffed-looking monarchs and the magic words of "Postage Two Pence." Mr. Vernon Winlass, who entrenched himself during business hours behind a storm battalion of secretaries, under-secretaries, assistant secretaries, messengers, clerks, managers, and office-boys, put aside all his business and opened wide his defenses at the merest whisper of old prints.

"It's just an old thing we came across when we were clearing out our old house," explained the man who had successfully penetrated these fortified frontiers—his card introduced him as Captain Tombs, which was an alias out of which Simon Templar derived endless amusement. "I took it along to Busby's to find out if it was worth anything, and they seemed to get quite excited about it. They told me I'd better show it to you."

Mr. Winlass nodded.

"I buy a good many prints from Busby's," he said smugly.

"If anything good comes their way, they always want me to see it."

He took the picture out of its brown paper wrapping and looked at it closely under the light. The glass was cracked and dirty, and the frame was falling apart and tied up with wire; but the result of his inspection gave him a sudden shock. The print was a discovery—if he knew anything at all about these things, it was worth at least five hundred pounds. Mr. Winlass frowned at it disparagingly.

"A fairly good specimen of a rather common plate," he said carelessly. "I should think it would fetch about ten pounds."

Captain Tombs looked surprised. "Is that all?" he grumbled. "The fellow at Busby's told me I ought to get anything from three hundred up for it."

"Ah-hum," said Mr. Winlass dubiously. He peered at the print again, and raised his eyes from it in an elaborate rendering of delight. "By Jove," he exclaimed, "I believe you're right. Tricky things, these prints. If you hadn't told me that, I might have missed it altogether. But it looks as if—if it is a genuine. . . . Well!" said Mr. Winlass expansively, "I almost think I'll take a chance on it. How about two hundred and fifty?"

"But the fellow at Busby's—"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Winlass testily. "But these are not good times for selling this sort of thing. People haven't got the money to spend. Besides, if you wanted to get a price like that, you'd have to get the picture cleaned up—get experts to certify it—all kinds of things like that. And they all cost money. And when you'd done them all, it mightn't prove to be worth anything. I'm offering to take a gamble on it and save you a lot of trouble and expense."

Captain Tombs hesitated; and Mr. Winlass pulled out a checkbook and unscrewed his fountain pen.

"Come, now," he urged genially. "I believe in Getting Things Done. Make up your mind, my dear chap. Suppose we split it at two-seventy-five—or two hundred and eighty—"

"Make it two hundred and eighty-five," said Captain Tombs reluctantly, "and I suppose I'd better let it go."

Mr. Winlass signed the cheque with the nearest approach to glee that he would ever be able to achieve while parting with money in any quantity; and he knew that he was getting the print for half its value. When Captain Tombs had gone, he set it up against the inkwell and fairly gloated over it. A moment later he picked up a heavy paperknife and attacked it with every evidence of ferocity.

But the scowl of pained in-

dignation which darkened his brow was directed solely against the cracked glass and the dilapidated frame. The picture was his new-born babe, his latest ewe lamb; and it was almost inevitable that he should rise against the vandal disfigurement of its shabby trappings as a fond mother would rise in wrath against the throwing of mud pies at her beloved offspring. When the horrible cradle that had sheltered it was stripped away and cast into the waste-basket, he set up the print again and gloated over it from every angle. After a long time he turned it over to stow it safely in an envelope—and it was when he did this that he noticed the writing on the back.

The reactions of an equally inevitable curiosity made him carry the picture over to the window to read the almost indecipherable scrawl. The ink was rusty with age, the spidery hand angular and old-fashioned, but after some study he was able to make out the words.

To my wife, On this day 16 Aprille did I lodge in ye houfe of one Thomaf Robertf a cobbler and did hyde under hyf herthe in Turkes Lane ye feventy thoufande golde piecef wich I ftole of Hyf Grace ye Duke. Finde them if thif letre come to thee and Godes blef-synge, John.

None of the members of Mr. Winlass's staff, some of whom had been with him through ten years of his hard-headed and dignified career, could remember any previous occasion when he had erupted from his office with so much violence. The big limousine which wafted him to Turk's Lane could not travel fast enough for him: he shuffled from one side of the seat to the other, craning forward to look for impossible gaps in the traffic, and emitting short nasal wuffs of almost canine impatience.

Dave Roberts was not in the little shop when Mr. Winlass walked in. A freckle-faced pug-nosed young man wearing the same apron came forward.

"I want to see Mr. Roberts," said Winlass, trembling with excitement, which he was trying not to show.

The freckle-faced youth shook his head.

"You can't see Mr. Roberts," he said. "He ain't here."

"Where can I find him?" barked Winlass.

"You can't find him," said the youth phlegmatically. "He don't want to be found. Want your shoes mended, sir?"

"No, I do not want my shoes mended!" roared Winlass, dancing in his impatience. "I want to see Mr. Roberts. Why can't I find him? Why don't he want to be found? Who the hell are you, anyhow?"

"I do be Mr. Roberts's second cousin, sir," said Peter Quentin, whose idea of dialects was hazy but convincing. "I do have bought Mr. Roberts's shop, and I'm here now, and Mr. Roberts ain't coming back, sir, that's who I be."

Mr. Winlass wrenched his features into a jovial beam.

"Oh, you're Mr. Roberts's cousin, are you?" he said, with gigantic affability. "How splendid! And you've bought his beautiful shop. Well, well. Have a cigar, my dear sir, have a cigar."

The young man took the weed, bit off the wrong end, and stuck it into his mouth with the band on—a series of motions which caused Mr. Winlass to shudder to his core. But no one could have deduced that shudder from the smile with which he struck and tendered a match.

"Thank 'ee, sir," said Peter Quentin. "Now, sir, can I mend thy shoes?"

He admitted afterwards to the Saint that the strain of maintaining what he fondly believed to be a suitable patois was making him a trifle light-headed; but Mr. Vernon Winlass was far too preoccupied to notice his aberations.

"No, my dear, sir," said Mr. Winlass, "my shoes don't want mending. But I should like to buy your lovely house."

The young man shook his head.

"I ain't a-wanting to sell 'er, sir."

"Not for a thousand pounds?" said Mr. Winlass calculatingly.

"Not for a thousand pounds, sir."

"Not even," said Mr. Winlass pleadingly, "for two thousand?"

"No, sir."

"Not even," suggested Mr. Winlass, with an effort which caused him acute pain, "if I offered you three thousand?"

The young man's head continued to shake.

"I do only just have bought 'er, sir. I must do my work somewhere. I wouldn't want to sell my house, not if you offered me four thousand for 'er, that I wouldn't."

"Five thousand," wailed Mr. Winlass, in dogged anguish.

The bidding rose to seven thousand five hundred before Peter Quentin relieved Mr. Winlass of further torture and himself of further lingual acrobatics. The cheque was made out and signed on the spot, and in return Peter attached his signature to a more complicated document which Mr. Winlass had ready to produce from his breast pocket; for Mr. Vernon Winlass believed in Getting Things Done.

"That's splendid," he boomed, when the formalities had been completed. "Now then, my dear

sir, how soon can you move out?"

"In ten minutes," said Peter Quentin promptly, and he was as good as his word.

He met the Saint in a neighboring hostelry and exhibited his trophy. Simon Templar took one look at it, and lifted his tankard.

"So perish all the ungodly," he murmured. "Let us get around to the bank before they close."

It was three days later when he drove down to Hampshire with Patricia Holm to supervise the installation of Uncle Dave Roberts in the cottage which had been prepared for him. It stood in the street of a village that had only one street, a street that was almost an exact replica of Turk's Lane set down in a valley between rolling hills. It had the same oak-beamed cottages, the same wrought-iron lamps over the lintels to light the doors by night, the same rows of tiny shops clustering face to face with their wares spread out in unglazed windows; and the thundering main road traffic went past five miles away and never knew that there was a village there.

"I think you'll be happy here, Uncle Dave," he said; and he did not need an answer in words to complete his reward.

It was a jubilant return journey for him; and they were in Guildford before he recollected that he had backed a very fast outsider at Newmarket. When he bought a paper he saw that that also had come home, and they had to stop at the Lion for celebrations.

"There are good moments in this life of sin, Pat," he remarked, as he started up the car again; and then he saw the expression on her face, and stared at her in concern. "What's the matter, old darling—has that last Dry Sack gone to your head?"

Patricia swallowed. She had been glancing through the other pages of the *Evening Standard* while he tinkered with the ignition; and now she folded the sheet down and handed it to him.

"Didn't you promise Uncle Dave whatever money there was in his house as well as that cottage?" she asked.

Simon took the paper and read the item she was pointing to.

TREASURE TROVE
IN LONDON
EXCAVATION
WINDFALL FOR WINLASS

The London clay, which has given up many strange secrets in its time, yesterday surrendered a treasure which has been in its keeping for 300 years.

Ten thousand pounds is the

estimated value of a hoard of gold coins and antique jewellery discovered by workmen engaged in demolishing an old house in Turk's Lane, Brompton, which is being razed to make way for a modern apartment building.

The owner of the property, Mr. Vernon Winlass—

The Saint had no need to read any more; and as a matter of fact he did not want to. For several seconds he was as far beyond the power of speech as if he had been born dumb.

And then, very slowly, the old Saintly smile came back to his lips.

"Oh, well, I expect our bank account will stand it," he said cheerfully, and turned the car back again towards Hamsphire.

HOW IS YOUR CRIME I. Q.?

How well do you know the authors popular in England a generation-or-two ago?

1. Who was the author of A DUET, the story of a suburban couple in late Victorian England, who fall in love and marry?
2. What was the name of the author of WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST?
3. Who was the author of that almost prophetic novel, THE POISON BELT?
4. Which British writer was Senior Physician of the Langman Hospital, in Bloemfontein, during the Boer War?
5. What was the name of the author of HABAKUK JEPHSON'S STATEMENT, published 1883 in the *Cornhill Magazine*, which Her Majesty's Advocate General at Gibraltar denounced as "a fabrication from beginning to end"?
6. Who was the author of MICAH CLARKE, a story of Monmouth's ill-fated rebellion?
7. What was the name of the author of THE LOST WORLD (later made into a movie) which described the adventures of a Professor Challenger on a plateau "peopled with Brontosauri and apemen"?

Please turn to page 124 for the answers.

baker street weather

by . . . Dr. J. D. Corrington

THE most universal topic of conversation has always been the weather. Indeed, Emily Post remarks, "It would seem that the variability of the weather has been purposely devised to furnish helpless mankind with unfailing material for conversation." Yet, with the exception of those air-borne individuals who go around dry-icing clouds, most of us, as sagely observed by Mark Twain, sound off a great deal but can do nothing about the weather.

There was one fair land, however, where the weather was made to order. In that far and revered country, peopled by beautiful damsels who answered to the name of Violet, and were adorned ever with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at the neck and wrists, the weather not only pervaded the scene, but frequently monopolized it.

The houses and the people were there, the voices, the fears, the problems, and the fog that was Holmes' England.

"Stand at the window here. Was ever such a dreary, dismal, unprofitable world? See how the yellow fog swirls down the

---

Julian D. Corrington, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Zoology, University of Miami, author of the recently published "Exploring with Your Microscope" (McGraw-Hill) and of more than 300 articles, makes a remarkable contribution to Holmesiana in the present article which is bound to interest both Baker Street Irregulars and the many others, here and abroad, who remember with affection and with awe the incredible tenant of 221B Baker Street.

street and drifts across the dun-colored houses. What could be more hopelessly prosaic and material? What is the use of having powers, Doctor, when one has no field upon which to exert them? Crime is commonplace, existence is commonplace, and no qualities save those which are commonplace have any function upon earth."[1]

Whereupon the celebrated roommates were promptly called to adventure by the uncommonplace Miss Morstan, and were off upon a thrilling series of exploits in which the moves were dictated by the weather. There is atmosphere to be created—both meteorological and literary. Specifically, what we need is something lowery, gloomy, murky—suited to the dire events to come, and so "a dense drizzly fog lay low upon the great city." Then, "we plunged away at a furious pace through the foggy streets," but when friend Sholto ventured forth with our crowd a few hours later, he donned "a very long befrogged topcoat with astrakhan collar and cuffs. This he buttoned tightly up in spite of the extreme closeness of the night." Now wait a minute! Let's get together on this. Just what kind of weather *are* we having tonight?

Ah—here is a further clue: "We had left the damp fog of the great city behind us, and the night was fairly fine. A warm wind blew from the westward," which did not in the least deter Mr. Holmes from addressing the gate guard at Pondicherry Lodge, an old boxing crony, with "Our friend won't keep us out in the cold now, I am sure." We threw in the sponge at this point, but at least we were certain of one thing; we were not going to be short-changed in the matter of weather!

In lieu of Klieg lights we shall invoke the silvery orb of night to do a bit of spot-lighting for us, and so our atmospheric mood must clear. The murk and fog have served their purpose, so out they go, and now the moon, in all her glory comes forth and enables Sholto to designate, "That is Bartholomew's window up there where the moonshine strikes. It is quite bright, but there is no light from within, I think."

Soon the doughty Dr. Watson has peeked through the keyhole of this room, and has recoiled in horror. "Moonlight was streaming into the room, and it was bright with a vague and shifty radiance. Looking straight at me and suspended, as it were, in the air, for all beneath was in shadow, there hung a face—the features—set—in a horrible smile, a fixed and unnatural grin—in that still and moonlit room." Ah, what an

[1] *Sign of the Four*

incomparable dramatist was the weather of Baker Street!

From the standpoint of Holmes's love of theatrical effect, the weather was clearly of prime importance. But the providing of clues was a more direct meteorological function.

> *"Window is snibbed on the inner side. Frame-work is solid. No hinges at the side. Let us open it. No water-pipe near. Roof quite out of reach. Yet a man has mounted by the window. It rained a little last night. Here is the print of a foot in mould upon the sill. And here is a circular muddy mark, and here again upon the floor, and here again by the table."*[1]

That circular muddy mark! We are not left long in the dark as to its nature. A providential amputation has intervened and a leaky carboy of creosote also plays into the hands of the foremost consulting detective of Europe.

> *"There's the print of Wooden-leg's hand— You see the slight smudge of blood upon the white plaster. What a lucky thing it is that we have had no very heavy rain since yesterday! The scent will lie upon the road in spite of their eight-and-twenty hours' start."*[1]

Come, come, Holmes! Make up your mind! Do you want rain for this case, or don't you? Baker Street weather is obliging, but after all—there are limits. All right, then, we'll have it dry, and so a long hike in the early dawn for a tall, ascetic investigator, a wounded half-pay Army doctor whose Jezail bullet has an extraordinary habit of roving from his shoulder[2] to his leg,[1] winding up in a noncommittal "limb,"[3] and for Toby, the indefatigable creosote-hound. They are foiled for the time being, but through no fault of the weather.

While atmospheric and astronomical conditions loom importantly in *The Sign of the Four*, they are by no means limited to this or even to a few of the sixty separate tales that comprise the Baker Street Canon. In no less than 33, or 55 per cent, of the adventures, the weather plays its part as an actor in the unfolding drama, and in 17, or 27 per cent, it has a leading role.

> *"I have ordered a carriage," said Lestrade as we sat over a cup of tea. "I knew your energetic nature, and that you would not be happy until you had been on the scene of the crime."*
>
> *"It was very nice and complimentary of you," Holmes answered. "It is entirely a question of barometric pressure."*[4]

[1] *Study in Scarlet*
[2] *Noble Bachelor*
[4] *Boscombe Valley Mystery*

That British barometers must have had a peculiar construction all their own, or that atmospheric pressure was not the same in Trafalgar Square as on Biscayne Boulevard, however, is amply attested by Holmes's next sequence of remarks.

> *Lestrade looked startled. "I do not quite follow," he said.*
>
> *"How is the glass? Twenty-nine, I see. No wind, and not a cloud in the sky. — I do not think that it is probable that I shall use the carriage tonight."*

Later that night, on returning from a short trip—

> *"The glass still keeps very high," he remarked as he sat down. "It is of importance that it should not rain before we are able to go over the ground."*[4]

Now a pressure of twenty-nine would never be considered as "very high," nor even as just plain high on this side of the Atlantic. In fact, it is on the low side to such a degree that it would send the good burghers of Miami into an immediate tizzy of phone calls to the hurricane warning service, and a general hauling out of storm shutters from garages. Twenty-nine should have induced Holmes to grab that carriage ride so helpfully proferred by the dapper Lestrade; but, as things turned out, the weather was on the side of law and order and again came to the rescue with a fair day, the barometer to the contrary notwithstanding, and the proper footprints and other evidences at the scene were all there for detection by the one man who had the wit and the skill to find them. In a last fling of repartee, before the denouement, the principals even requisitioned the weather metaphorically:

> *—replied Lestrade with some warmth, "all theories to the contrary are the merest moonshine."*
>
> *"Well, moonshine is a brighter thing than fog," said Holmes, laughing.*[4]

There is no accounting for taste in the matter of weather; some like it hot and some like it cold. But Holmes could be more eccentric than most.

> *On a wild, tempestuous evening, when the wind screamed and rattled against the windows, —*
>
> *"What a splendid night it is!"*
>
> *"You like this weather?"*
>
> *"It suits my purpose. Watson, I mean to burgle Milverton's house tonight."*[5]

Dr. Edward Van Liere, who has looked into this matter of

[5] *Charles Augustus Milverton*

Baker Street weather, is a physician who can see eye to eye with John H. Watson, M.D. He thus believes that Watson's preoccupation with affairs meteorological stems from the fact that healers of the sick must go abroad in every sort of weather, and that states of the weather are a matter of perpetual interest to the general practitioner.[6]

> *"I have the advantage of knowing your habits, my dear Watson," said he. "When your round is a short one you walk, and when it is a long one you use a hansom. As I perceive that your boots, although used, are by no means dirty, I cannot doubt that you are at present busy enough to justify the hansom."*
>
> *"Excellent!" I cried.*
>
> *"Elementary," said he.*[7]

The most vivid description of Baker Street weather occurs in *The Five Orange Pips*:

> *It was in the latter days of September, and the equinoctial gales had set in with exceptional violence. All day the wind had screamed and the rain had beaten against the windows, so that even here in the heart of great, hand-made London we were forced to raise our minds for the instant from the routine of life, and to recognize the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilization, like untamed beasts in a cage. As evening drew in, the storm grew higher and louder, and the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney. Sherlock Holmes sat moodily at one side of the fireplace, cross-indexing his records of crime, while I at the other was deep in one of Clark Russell's fine sea-stories until the howl of the gale from without seemed to blend with the text, and the splash of the rain to lengthen out into the long swash of the sea waves.*

Resuming, after the weird recital of his problem by the ill-fated John Openshaw—

> *Outside the wind still screamed and the rain splashed and pattered against the windows. This strange, wild story seemed to have come to us from amid the mad elements—blown in upon us like a sheet of sea-weed in a gale—and now to have been reabsorbed by them once more.*[8]

From being plain ornery the weather now turns its hand to murder: "The night—was extremely dark and stormy, so that,

[6] Van Liere, Edward J., *Doctor Watson and the Weather*, Quart.., Phi Beta Pi Med. Frat., Vol. 42, No. 3, Nov., 1945, pp 144-6.
[7] *Crooked Man*
[8] *Five Orange Pips*

in spite of the help of several passers-by, it was quite impossible to effect a rescue" of the unfortunate John Openshaw, Esq., who had been nudged off the Waterloo Bridge. Finally, a repentant weather becomes avenger, robbing Holmes of his triumphant plan to set the pips on Captain James Calhoun, of the Bark *Lone Star* out of Savannah. "Very long and very severe were the equinoctial gales that year," and so the *Lone Star* joined the *Gloria Scott,* the *Norah Creina,*[9] and the Cutter *Alicia*[10] in that Nirvana of conveniently foundered vessels.

The most cheerful aspect of cold weather the world around in the higher latitudes is a roaring fire in the fireplace, and the Holmes-Watson menage formed no exception to this universal pyromancy. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle dearly loved the crackling log or glowing coal, so much so that no less than 27 of the exploits included mention of a fire. There was, for example, the entrance to the rooms at 221 B Baker Street of the tragic figure of Helen Stoner.[11]

> *"Mrs. Hudson has had the good sense to light the fire. Pray draw up to it, and I shall order you a cup of hot coffee, for I observe that you are shivering."*
>
> *"It is not cold which makes me shiver," said the woman in a low voice, changing her seat as requested.*
>
> *"What, then?"*
>
> *"It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror."*

Run, chill. Run all the way down our spine. Enjoy yourself, chill, while you may, for you are as nothing to your bigger brothers who will positively glaciate us when the sinister, if mythical swamp adder glides down the bell-pull rope.

In describing her sister's death at the fangs of this unclassified reptile, Miss Stoner gives us another dramatic picture of weather.

> *"It was a wild night. The wind was howling outside, and the rain was beating and splashing against the windows. Suddenly, amid all the hubbub of the gale, there burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman."*[11]

Shall we ever completely forget that scream? No—nor the violent appearance at Baker Street of the formidable Dr. Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran, with his poker-bending proclivities.

> *"My stepdaughter has been here. I have traced her. What has she been saying to you?"*

[9] *Resident Patient*
[10] *Thor Bridge*
[11] *Speckled Band*

"It is a little cold for the time of the year," said Holmes.[11]

But how prosaic, indeed how unimaginable all these screams, these marrow-chilling events without the contrapuntal weather!

A fire was king-pin in *The Adventure of the Empty House.* For the purpose of dispatching the Honorable Ronald Adair with an expanding bullet from Von Herder's air-gun, it was essential that a window be open. But it was March 30th, because the London season was still on, because otherwise the Honorable Ronald would not have been among those available for assassination. And so it was a "bleak and boisterous night, and the wind whistled shrilly," and so a maid lit the only faulty fire in all the Chronicles. It smoked, and she opened the window. Ah, Maid! Though nameless, you have much upon your soul! Had you, in your innocent youth, been a Girl Guide, the Honorable Ronald would have been living still, a doting grandfather now; but the world would then not have thrilled to the greatest and most unexpected of modern resurrections. So doubtless the Honorable Ronald is well sacrificed; he probably wouldn't have amounted to much anyway, with his gambling proclivities.

A fire was also the capsheaf among clues in *The Adventure of the Devil's Foot.* It will be recalled that the subversive Mortimer Tregennis threw some of the homicidal powder of *Radix pedis diaboli* into the fire as he left the family card party, and that the fire had been kindled at his own suggestion.

"Why a fire?" he (Holmes) asked once. "Had they always a fire in this small room on a spring evening?"

Not only the temperature but also the conditions of light and precipitation aroused the suspicions of the great Baker Street specialist. Explaining that an alleged prowler could scarcely have been discerned through the window by the card players, he continued,

"The only suggestion in this direction comes from Mortimer Tregennis himself, who says that his brother spoke about some movement in the garden. That is certainly remarkable, as the night was rainy, cloudy, and dark."

Now, however, it is quite essential to a further progress toward a solution that the weather take it easy and permit certain al fresco experiments, including the near-demise of the principals through burning some of this diabolical root-powder in a lamp. Accordingly, the month of choice

was again March, when there is no actual weather, but only samples of weather.

There could have been no burglarizing of the great green safe of the unspeakable *Charles Augustus Milverton* by that pair of foolhardy but chivalrous trespassers, Holmes and Watson, followed by wholesale destruction of its contained scandalous letters and papers, had there been no cheery fire in Milverton's grate. *Wisteria Lodge* also possessed a fateful fire. Had it performed its mission, it would have consumed the pellet of paper thrown into it by Mr. Aloysius Garcia, and his subsequent brutal murder would have remained unsolved.

This is another case where the weather provided the explanation, but where Holmes, as usual, received all the credit. As the astute Baynes asserted,

> *"It was a dog-grate, Mr. Holmes, and he overpitched it. I picked this out unburned from the back of it."*

Accordingly, the world and Mr. Sherlock Holmes were apprised of a most singular message, that touched off a notable enterprise, and sent American readers scrambling for their dictionaries to find out what in Samuel Hill a "dog-grate" might be.

> *Our own colours, green and white. Green open, white shut. Main stair, first corridor seventh right, green baize. Godspeed. D.*

So strong was the pyrophily at 221 B that there were even two occasions on which fires were kindled in the heat of summer! In the *Crooked Man,* the titular character is one Henry Wood, horribly deformed through the infamy of the corpse, at a time when the latter was a going concern known as Sergeant James Barclay. Watson says, of Holmes's visit to Wood, "In spite of the warm weather he was crouching over a fire, and the little room was like an oven." The Chronicler himself was guilty of the same misfeasance in the *Stock-Broker's Clerk,* wherein Holmes deduced that Watson had, even in June, toasted his feet in front of a fire as a means of combating a summer cold. To what lengths can one go as a pyrolater?

While the colder months, from November through March, generate the more formidable brands of weather, they by no means monopolize the climate of Baker Street, as recollection of certain particularly foul episodes might persuade one to believe. As a matter of fact, only sixteen exploits were performed in this five-month span, while the shorter summer quarter of

June, July, and August emcee'd no less than nineteen. Sunshine comes in a close second to fire as a weathervane, with twenty-six appearances. Perhaps the one that rises first to mind is the casting of the sun's shadow of a tree in the *Musgrave Ritual*, along with the compelling interest of that catechism itself:

> *Whose was it?*
> *His who is gone.*
> *Who shall have it?*
> *He who will come.*
> *Where was the sun?*
> *Over the oak.*
> *Where was the shadow?*
> *Under the elm.*
> *How was it stepped?*
> *North by ten and by ten, east by five and by five, south by two and by two, west by one and by one, and so under.*

Shades of the *Goldbug* and the "good glass in the bishop's hostel in the devil's seat forty-one degrees and thirteen minutes northeast and by north." What so thrilling as a hunt for buried treasure, especially when one of the two trees used as indicator points is no longer there?

Illustrious among descriptions of hot weather is this gem, so well thought of by Watson that he used it twice, the first time in the *Resident Patient*, and again in the *Cardboard Box*.

> *It had been a close, rainy day in October. Our blinds were half-drawn, and Holmes lay curled upon the sofa, reading and re-reading a letter which he had received by the morning post. For myself, my term of service in India had trained me to stand heat better than cold, and a thermometer of ninety was no hardship. But the paper was uninteresting. Parliament had risen. Everybody was out of town, and I yearned for the glades of the New Forest or the shingle of Southsea. A depleted bank account had caused me to postpone my holiday, and as to my companion, neither the country nor the sea presented the slightest attraction to him.*[12]

There follows the well-known pastiche of C. Auguste Dupin in which Watson's brown study is interrupted by a remark from Holmes, showing that all along he had been *en rapport* with the good doctor's mental sequence. However, "It was very superficial, my dear Watson, I assure you."

In the second appearance of this account, the beginning is somewhat different, but after that the remainder is the same.

> *It was a blazing hot day in August. Baker Street was like an oven, and the glare of the sunlight upon the yellow brickwork of the house across the road*

[12] *Resident Patient*

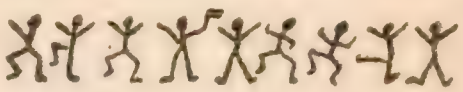
was painful to the eye. It was hard to believe that these were the same walls which loomed so gloomily through the fogs of winter. Our blinds were half-drawn, and Holmes lay curled—[13]

This amazing duplication is analyzed and explained by H. W. Bell,[14] who finds that this material was written for the *Cardboard Box,* where the wording is appropriate (August, blinds drawn, blazing hot, Holmes reading letter that enters story later, yearning for glades or sea). But this tale was squeezed out of the *Memoirs* when eleven stories were taken from the *Strand Magazine* to be published in book form. Since this introduction was considered too good to lie buried, it was lifted with few changes to the *Resident Patient,* in which it is not particularly appropriate (October, rainy, Holmes reading letter that is never mentioned again). Later the *Cardboard Box* came out as part of *His Last Bow.* But the weather of Baker Street is a stout fellow, and proved it could take even transmigration.

Not only the published, but also the unwritten episodes include a case where Old Sol directed the course of investigation. As an illustration of his remark concerning evidence that "I dare call nothing trivial," Holmes said,

"You will remember, Watson, how the dreadful business of the Abernetty family was first brought to my notice by the depth which the parsley had sunk into the butter upon a hot day."[15]

The moon is mentioned in fifteen adventures and figures prominently in eight of these, each time as revealing some person whom the night would otherwise have cloaked in secrecy. In addition to the spot-lighting of the mortal remains of Bartholomew Sholto; Arthur Holder saw the odious Sir George Burnwell making off with the *Beryl Coronet;* Holmes could follow every movement of Joseph Harrison as this scoundrel searched for the *Naval Treaty;* the ill-fated Hilton Cubitt and his wife watched Slaney as he prepared to write



with his *Dancing Men;* Dodd recognized his supposedly leprous pal, the *Blanched Soldier;* Professor Presbury, the simian *Creeping Man,* "looked like some huge bat glued against the side of his own house"; and at *Shoscombe Old Place* Sir Robert

[13] *Cardboard Box*
[14] *Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: The Chronology of Their Adventures.* Also Vol. 1, No. 3, *The Baker Street Journal.*
[15] *Six Napoleons*

Norberton and the little rat-faced Norlett did not sustain the privacy of their movements, all because of the inconstant moon. Holmes himself made a capital slip and was disclosed in spectacular fashion:

> *The moon was low upon the right, and the jagged pinacle of a granite tor stood up against the lower curve of its silver disc. There, outlined as black as an ebony statue on that shining background, I saw the figure of a man upon the tor. — As far as I could judge, the figure was that of a tall, thin man. He stood with his legs a little separated, his arms folded, his head bowed, as if he were brooding over that enormous wilderness of peat and granite which lay before him. He might have been the very spirit of that terrible place.*[16]

Precipitation is a most effective aid to criminological investigation, and where it can be ordered, its assistance is of incalculable value. There is rain in eighteen items of the Saga, fog in ten, and snow in three. In eight, the rain is essential in securing evidence; in two, although there was rain, there still were no footprints, a fact of cardinal importance in each case, and in the *Boscombe Valley Mystery,* as we have seen, it was imperative that there be no rain if traces of the crime were to be elucidated.

While investigating the theft of the *Naval Treaty,* the great detective was questioning the unfortunate Percy Phelps, who stated,

> *"The corridor which led to the room was laid down with a kind of creamy linoleum which shows an impression very easily. We examined it very carefully, but found no outline of any footmark."*
>
> *"Had it been raining all evening?"*
>
> *"Since about seven."*
>
> *"How is it, then, that the woman who came into the room about nine left no traces with her muddy boots?"*
>
> *"I am glad you raised the point. It occurred to me at the time. The charwomen are in the habit of taking off their boots at the commissionaire's office, and putting on list slippers."* (dictionary, please.)
>
> *"That is very clear. There were no marks, then, though the night was a wet one? The chain of events is certainly one of extraordinary interest."*

From all of which Holmes deduces that the culprit came in a cab, a conclusion that materially advanced the solution. Also, in the *Musgrave Ritual,* the man who stole the royal crown of

[16] *Hound of the Baskervilles*

the Stuarts could not be traced in his supposed flight from Hurlstone in spite of rain the night before, and this for the very simple reason that his body was at the time encumbering the cellar crypt.

Footprints proved of the utmost importance in the *Study in Scarlet, Sign of the Four, Resident Patient, Golden Pince-Nez,* and *Hound of the Baskervilles.* In the category of narratives known only by title, this reference to rain should be noted:

> *"Among these unfinished tales is that of Mr. James Phillimore, who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world.*[17]

Time was of the essence at *Wisteria Lodge,* and the patriotic, crafty Garcia went to considerable length to establish an alibi. This was demolished by Baynes, of the official police, since the body of Garcia "had been there since one o'clock. There was rain about that time, and his death had certainly been before the rain." Here the unattractive but indubitably respectable John Scott Eccles interposed:

"But that is perfectly impossible, Mr. Baynes. His voice is unmistakable. I could swear to it that it was he who addressed me in my bedroom at that very hour." Only Holmes could see that these two statements were not incompatible and that the alibi had been rigged. Thus it came about that the weather spoiled an otherwise perfect scheme.

The most famous trackings of imprints, however, were not those of persons at all, but of horses, cows, and bicycles, in two of the most unforgettable sequences in all Sherlockiana.

Silver Blaze, the equine assassin, saved his own life while taking that of the perfidious Straker on a rainy night. There were all sorts of tracks in that lethal hollow of land. Wet clothing proved that a red herring named Simpson had been out in the storm. The fact that there was rain without wind proved that Straker's coat had been placed rather than blown upon the furze-bushes (Mother, what is a furze-bush?). But the crowning weathermade achievement comes in the tracking of the fugitive horse to Mapleton, the rival establishment; the fitting of the sample shoe to the imprint; and the discovery of human impressions alongside those of the steed, leading Holmes straight to the truculent Master Silas Brown, the most "perfect compound of the bully, coward, and sneak" he had known. But Brown folded, the hidden and disguised thoroughbred was produced at the final instant to win

[17] *Thor Bridge*

the race, and all was forgiven the prankster sleuth.

Tracking prints in wet soil reaches its greatest height in the *Priory School,* notable as the only instance of the practice of this art in dry weather.

> *"A good cyclist does not need a high road. The moor is intersected with paths, and the moon was at the full. — There is a watercourse across the moor. You see it marked here in the map. In some parts it widens into a morass. This is particularly so in the region between Holdernesse Hall and the school. It is vain to look elsewhere for tracks in this dry weather, but at* that *point there is certainly a chance of some record being left."*

It is, of course, a matter of history how the brilliant print-tracing by both Holmes and Watson, distinguishing the Palmer from the patched Dunlop tire, led to discovery of the dead body of the hapless German master and the live body of young Lord Saltire, capped by Holmes's deduction of a horse equipped with shoes to imitate the cloven hoof of a cow.

> *"What a blind beetle I have been, not to draw my conclusion."*
>
> *"And what is your conclusion?"*
>
> *"Only that it is a remarkable cow which walks, canters, and gallops. By George! Watson, it was no brain of a country publican that thought out such a blind as that."*

Therefore seek the master mind, and put the finger on the brilliant but illegitimate Mr. James Wilder.

Snow comes in for one superlative inning by permitting solution of the mystery of the *Beryl Coronet.* With the aid of Holmes, the weather elucidates this crime by virtue of footprints in the snow. Holmes: "I knew that none had fallen since the evening before, and also that there had been a strong frost to preserve impressions." Yet, except for this admission, does he give credit where credit is due? Not he! Observe—

> *"I saw an ill-dressed vagabond in the lane yesterday evening," said Mr. Holder.*
>
> *"Precisely. It was I. I found that I had my man, so I came home and changed* my *clothes. — After much chaffering I got* our *stones at £1000 apiece. Then I looked in upon your son, told him that all was right, and eventually got to* my *bed about two o'clock, after what I may call a really hard day's work."*

But would not Holmes have been in a fine pickle, in spite of

all this first-person-singularizing, without the work of those two able sleuths, the Snowman and Jack Frost? Where, indeed, would have been his solution without that unparalleled collection of snow prints? A man with boots, a woman who ran, "as was shown by the deep toe and light heel marks," a wooden-legged man! — and a man with naked feet! ! !

Thus far in this dissertation we have shown remarkable restraint. Nowhere have we alluded to the gasogene, the tantalus, the Persian slipper, or the indoor revolver practice. Now, however, we have reached that situation, coming into the stretch, where we can pull out all the stops.

A final type of precipitation, the most celebrated, influential, and dramatic variety of Baker Street weather, is fog. This visible form of water vapor figures in ten of the sixty accounts, including all of the novels, and to a significant extent in five, always as a screen.

In the third week of November, in the year 1895, a dense yellow fog settled down upon London. From the Monday to the Thursday I doubt whether it was ever possible from our windows in Baker Street to see the loom of the opposite houses. The first day Holmes had spent in cross-indexing his huge book of references. The second and third had been patiently occupied upon a subject which he had recently made his hobby— the music of the Middle Ages. But when, for the fourth time, after pushing back our chairs from breakfast we saw the greasy, heavy brown swirl still drifting past us and condensing in oily drops upon the window-panes, my comrade's impatient and active nature could endure this drab existence no longer. He paced restlessly about our sitting-room in a fever of suppressed energy, biting his nails, tapping the furniture, and chafing against inaction.

"Nothing of interest in the paper, Watson?" he said.

I was aware that by anything of interest, Holmes meant anything of criminal interest. There was the news of a revolution, of a possible war, and of an impending change of government; but these did not come within the horizon of my companion. I could see nothing recorded in the shape of crime which was not commonplace and futile. Holmes groaned and resumed his restless meanderings.

"The London criminal is certainly a dull fellow," said he in the querulous voice of the sportsman whose game has failed him. "Look out of this window, Watson. See how the fig-

ures loom up, are dimly seen, and then blend once more into the cloud-bank. The thief or the murderer could roam London on such a day as the tiger does the jungle, unseen until he pounces, and then evident only to his victim."

"There have," said I, "been numerous petty thefts."

Holmes snorted his contempt.

"This great and sombre stage is set for something more worthy than that," said he. "It is fortunate for this community that I am not a criminal."

"It is, indeed!" said I heartily.

"Suppose that I were Brooks or Woodhouse, or any of the fifty men who have good reason for taking my life, how long could I survive against my own pursuit? A summons, a bogus appointment, and all would be over. It is well they don't have days of fog in the Latin countries—the countries of assassination."[18]

In the *Cardboard Box,* the mist over the sea hides a murder of revenge, while in the *Red Circle,* as Sherlock Holmes explains,

> *"It is clear now that some danger is threatening your lodger. It is equally clear that his enemies, lying in wait for him near your door, mistook your husband for him in the foggy morning light."*

Fog is again a shield in the *Dying Detective,* but this time for Holmes, whose malingering tactics must be concealed from the over-zealous Watson and also from the crafty, murderous Mr. Culverton Smith, the Sumatran planter of coffee and people. But no mention of fog and Baker Street in the same breath can fail to bring to instant recall the incomparable account of the loss and recovery of the *Bruce-Partington Plans.* And of how the ill-starred young Cadogan West, escorting his fiancée, Miss Violet Westbury, to the threater, dashed away into the fog because he had seen the treasonous Colonel Valentine Walter purloining the plans for the Bruce-Partington submarine, within whose radius naval warfare becomes impossible; how "this wretched youth," as Mycroft dubbed him, followed the absconder, only to meet his death under the life preserver of Hugo Oberstein, of 13 Caulfield Gardens, Kensington; how the conspirators laid West's body (minus ticket) on the roof of an Underground carriage, a post-mortem act securely hidden by the all-pervading fog; and how this cadaver, taking its penultimate ride, still without a ticket ("No ticket! Dear me, Watson, this is really very singular. Ac-

[18] *Bruce-Partington Plans*

cording to my experience it is not possible to reach the platform of a Metropolitan train without exhibiting one's ticket.")—this cadaver catapulted from the roof as the train roared round the curve, pitching and swaying on the points! A point in London, a frog over here:—how travel increases one's vocabulary! And Oberstein! Have we not met this bounder before? Ah yes,—to be sure. We find Hugo Oberstein and Louis La Rothière, two of three suspects in this case, consorting again in the *Second Stain,* where the third member of the cloak-and-dagger trio, Eduardo Lucas, of Godolphin Street, was removed from the scene.

By *Bruce-Partington* times, this charming person, one of the best amateur tenors in the country, had been replaced by one Adolph Meyer, upsetting the balance of nations. But to return to the late Cadogan West, plunging wildly through the fog-girt night atop a pitching and swaying carriage:

> *"We have had some fresh evidence this morning," said Lestrade. "A passenger who passed Aldgate in an ordinary Metropolitan train about 11:40 on Monday night declares that he heard a heavy thud, as of a body striking the line, just before the train reached the station. There was a dense fog, however, and nothing could be seen."*

In spite of the constant imminence of fog in this account, the real apotheosis of the fog is to be found in that textbook of meteorology, that classical disquisition on every form of weather, good, bad, and indifferent, the *Hound of the Baskervilles.* A more appropriate title for this work would have been, "The Climatology of Dartmoor, including a curious old-world tale about a dog." No reader, having once been there, can ever completely shake off the ominous atmosphere of the moor.

> *The moor is sombre; ever dark against the sky; the bronzing bracken, the mottled bramble, the melancholy, yellow leaves of the waning year; the drifts of rotting vegetation; the huge expanse and gloomy curve of the moor, with gnarled and craggy cairns and tors; the grim suggestiveness of the barren waste. A cold wind swept down that desolate plain, setting us shivering; a fiendish man lurked there, hiding in a burrow like a wild beast, with his heart full of malignancy. Under the darkling sky Baskerville fell silent and pulled his overcoat more closely about him, as if he could shut out the melancholy moor, the dull moaning of the autumn*

wind, the falling of leaves, the night air heavy with the smell of damp and decay.

By the time the gentle reader is thoroughly indoctrinated with a dozen or so pages of this sort of atmosphere, he is ready to leap from his chair and run for cover when—

"I say, Watson," said the baronet, "what would Holmes say to this (expedition)? How about that hour of darkness in which the power of evil is exalted?"

As if in answer to his words there rose suddenly out of the vast gloom of the moor that strange cry which I had already heard upon the borders of the great Grimpen Mire. It came with the wind through the silence of the night, a long, deep mutter, then a rising howl, and then the sad moan in which it died away. Again and again it sounded, the whole air throbbing with it, strident, wild, and menacing. The baronet caught my sleeve and his face glimmered white through the darkness.

"My God, what's that, Watson?"

"I don't know. It's a sound they have on the moor. I heard it once before."

It died away, and an absolute silence closed in upon us. We stood straining our ears, but nothing came.

"Watson," said the baronet, "it was the cry of a hound."

My blood ran cold in my veins, for there was a break in his voice which told of the sudden horror which had seized him.

"What do they call this sound?" he asked.

"Who?"

"The folk on the countryside?"

"Oh, they are ignorant people. Why should you mind what they call it?"

"Tell me, Watson. What do they say of it?"

I hesitated but could not escape the question.

"They say it is the cry of the Hound of the Baskervilles."

But if you think that all the changes have been rung on this carillon by this time, you underestimate the power of Baker Street weather as transposed to Dartmoor. Here is more condensed atmosphere and its full-scale aftermath.

There were two days of dull, foggy drizzle and the ever-present dreary curves of the moor. The Baronet was in a black reaction and had a feeling of ever-impending danger, the more terrible because he could not define it. The bleak, cold, shelterless moor; the sodden moor; the melancholy downs, with rain squalls, trailing in gray

wreaths down the sides of the fantastic hills; the heavy, slate-colored hills, on this tempestuous and melancholy day. There was the rain-lashed window, the black window, the blurred pane, with outdoors the wild night and the wind-swept trees bordering the vast expanse of the melancholy moor.

And then the punch lines.

A terrible scream—a prolonged yell of horror and anguish burst out of the silence of the moor. That frightful cry turned the blood to ice in my veins.

"Oh, my God!" I gasped. "What is it? What does it mean?"

Holmes had sprung to his feet, and I saw his dark, athletic outline at the door of the hut, his shoulders stooping, his head thrust forward, his face peering into the darkness.

"Hush!".. he ..whispered. "Hush!"

The cry had been loud on account of its vehemence, but it had pealed out from somewhere far off on the shadowy plain. Now it burst upon our ears, nearer, louder, more urgent than before.

"Where is it?" Holmes whispered; and I knew from the thrill of his voice that he, the man of iron, was shaken to the soul. "Where is it, Watson?"

"There, I think." I pointed into the darkness.

"No, there!"

Again the agonized cry swept through the silent night, louder and much nearer than ever. And a new sound mingled with it, a deep, muttered rumble, musical and yet menacing, rising and falling like the low, constant murmur of the sea.

"The hound!" cried Holmes. "Come, Watson, come! Great heavens, if we are too late!"

It was then our old plot-saving friend, the Queen of the Night, answered her cue. The moon rose over the tors in time to show our collaborators that the dead man (he who yelled) was Selden, the convict, and not Sir Henry; the same moon that two hundred and fifty years before had revealed to the horrified followers of the original Sir Hugo that foul thing, that great black beast who plucked the first Baskervillian throat.

Footprints in wet paths also figure in the solution; not alone those of the tragic Sir Charles, but as well those of the other great protagonist of the yew alley episode.

"Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

We do not feel certain that the hair on our nape has ever completely flattened out following

the first application of this sentence.

It was in this case also that Holmes, albeit unwittingly, pulled the prize boner of his career when he said, "—and then, Lestrade, we will take the London fog out of your throat by giving you a breath of the pure night air of Dartmoor." Pure night air my eye! Who did he think he was kidding? And just what *did* happen? Along came the gol-darndest fog in all literary history, and from it burst forth the most hellish sight ever seen by pre-atomic-age man!

> *There was a thin, crisp, continuous patter from somewhere in the heart of that crawling bank. The cloud was within fifty yards of where we lay, and we glared at it, all three, uncertain what horror was about to break from the heart of it. I was at Holmes's elbow, and I glanced for an instant at his face. It was pale and exultant, his eyes shining brightly in the moonlight. But suddenly they started forward in a rigid, fixed stare, and his lips parted in amazement. At the same instant Lestrade gave a yell of terror and threw himself face downward upon the ground. I sprang to my feet, my inert hand grasping my pistol, my mind paralyzed by the dreadful shape which had sprung out upon us from the shadows of the fog. A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog.*

In the end this king of fogs atoned by accomplishing the death of the baronicidal Stapleton.

> *"No one could find his way into the Grimpen Mire tonight."*
>
> *"He may find his way in, but never out," she cried. "How can he see the guiding wands tonight?"*

This time Holmes gave tribute to the weather as a better plot-wrangler than he. In the closing chapter he said,

> *"That Sir Henry should have been exposed to this is, I must confess, a reproach to my management of the case, but we had no means of forseeing the terrible and paralyzing spectacle which the beast presented, nor could we predict the fog which*

enabled him to burst upon us at such short notice."

Members of the Eminent Order of Freemen, in parts of the country where their lodges are respected, as well as in the mining districts of Pennsylvania where they are known and feared as the Scowrers, can attest to the preoccupation with weather evident in their ritual.

"Dark nights are unpleasant."
"Yes, for strangers to travel."
"The clouds are heavy."
"Yes, a storm is approaching."[19]

Ah, yes, indeed, a storm! One of those gales, no doubt, of which the good Doctor was so fond in his recounting of the fates of Holmes's clients and victims. The equinoctial gales and the non-equinoctial gales! How they wrecked the Victorian ships and avenged the wrongs of stout-hearted men and fair women. They even blew the formidable *Cyanea capillata,* the *Lion's Mane*, north from its accustomed haunts to the vicinity of the little village of Fulworth, where the slopes of the south downs end abruptly in the chalk cliffs of the Channel. There, where the great detective had retired, the huge medusa was destined to slay young Fitzroy McPherson, the science master, and his dog, and then almost succeed in making away with Ian Murdoch (mathematics), both from Stackhurst's coaching establishment, before diagnosed and destroyed by Holmes, the student of bees.

The man who MacDonald loved, Lestrade admired, Gregson tolerated, and of whom Watson wrote, "him whom I shall ever regard as the best and the wisest man whom I have ever known,"[20] maintained in his consulting library that bible of weather information, Whitaker's Almanac.[19] By a close margin he escaped paying the price for putting in the new edition so early in January, since Porlock had chosen the older issue as a source for his cipher, and that price would have entailed an enormous loss to all his followers. For instance, that cable from Ivy Douglas, announcing another fateful storm.

Jack has been lost overboard in gale off St. Helena. No one knows how accident occurred.

And thus passed Birdy Edwards, the intrepid man of Pinkerton, one of the bravest men ever to look out at us from between the covers of a book. We had thought him safe from the vengeful Tiger Cormac and the brothers Willaby, and his death

[19] *Valley of Fear*
[20] *Final Problem*

was a crushing blow. But Holmes had warned him.

> *"Ha! It came like that, did it?" said Holmes thoughtfully. "Well I've no doubt it was well stage-managed."*
>
> *"You mean that you think there was no accident?"*
>
> *"None in the world."*
>
> *"He was murdered?"*
>
> *"Surely!"*
>
> *"So I think also. These infernal Scowrers, this cursed vindictive nest of criminals—"*
>
> *"No, no, my good sir," said Holmes. "There is a master hand here. It is no case of sawed-off shotguns and clumsy six-shooters. You can tell an old master by the sweep of his brush. I can tell a Moriarty when I see one. This crime is from London, not from America.—These Americans were well advised. Having an English job to do, they took into partnership, as any foreign criminal could do, this great consultant in crime."*

Moriarty and his *La Jeune Fille a l'Agneau!* The Greuze that fetched one million two hundred thousand francs at the Portalis sale and now hung in a professor's study. What a train of thought this fact started within the reasonably acute cerebral hemispheres of Inspector Alec MacDonald! Those were, of course, the early days at the end of the '80's, when he was far from having attained the national fame which he subsequently achieved.

But alas, we must leave them. There they are—Holmes, Watson, MacDonald, and White Mason, standing behind the shrubbery, opposite the drawbridge of Birlstone Manor House—the cold, damp reek from the moat setting their teeth to chattering. They will rise superior to this bitter weather and get their man, as he lifts the sodden bundle of clothing from its watery place of concealment, and we will mentally rush with them across the drawbridge, and accost the astounded Cecil Barker.[19]

In parting, we have but a single plea. In the name of Truth, permit us to alter, ever so slightly, the wording of that most famous of all exclamations of the immortal tenant of 221 B Baker Street—

> *"Come, Watson, come! The game is afoot, weather permitting!"*[21]

[21] *Abbey Grange*

adventure of the priory school

by...Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Holmes gave a cry of delight. Right across the lower part of the box was the clear impression of the Palmer tire!

WE HAVE had some dramatic entrances and exits upon our small stage at Baker Street, but I cannot recollect anything more sudden and startling than the first appearance of Dr. Thorney-croft Huxtable, M.A., Ph.D., etc. His card, which seemed too small to carry the weight of his academic distinctions, preceded him by a few seconds, and then he entered himself—so large, so pompous, and so dignified that he was the very embodiment of self-possession and solidity. And yet his first action when the door had closed behind him was to stagger against the table, whence he slipped down upon the floor and there was that majestic figure prostrate and insensible upon our bearskin hearthrug.

We had sprung to our feet, and for a few moments we stared in silent amazement at this pondrous piece of wreckage, which told of some sudden and fatal storm far out on the ocean of life. Then Holmes hurried with a cushion for his head, and I with brandy for his lips. The heavy white face was seamed

While Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) is better known for his stories about Sherlock Holmes, the first scientific worker in crime detection, he was also the author of several novels, MICAH CLARKE, THE LOST WORLD, THE WHITE COMPANY, *etc., and a historian of note. Conan Doyle also took an active interest in cases where a miscarriage of justice was feared.*

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with lines of trouble, the hanging pouches under the closed eyes were leaden in color, the loose mouth dropped dolorously at the corners, the rolling chins were unshaven. Collar and shirt bore the grime of a long journey, and the hair bristled unkempt from the well-shaped head. It was a sorely stricken man who lay before us.

"What is it, Watson?" asked Holmes.

"Absolute exhaustion—possibly mere hunger and fatigue," said I, with my finger on the thready pulse, where the stream of life trickled thin and small.

"Return ticket from Mackleton, in the North of England," said Holmes, drawing it from the watch-pocket. "It is not twelve o'clock yet. He has certainly been an early starter."

The puckered eyelids had begun to quiver, and now a pair of vacant gray eyes looked up at us.

An instant later the man had scrambled on to his feet, his face crimson with shame.

"Forgive this weakness, Mr. Holmes; I have been a little overwrought. Thank you, if I might have a glass of milk and a biscuit I have no doubt that I should be better. I came personally, Mr. Holmes, in order to ensure that you would return with me. I feared that no telegram would convince you of the absolute urgency of the case."

"When you are quite restored—"

"I am quite well again. I cannot imagine how I came to be so weak. I wish you, Mr. Holmes, to come to Mackleton with me by the next train."

My friend shook his head.

"My colleague, Dr. Watson, could tell you that we are very busy at present. I am retained in this case of the Ferrers Documents, and the Abergavenny murder is coming up for trial. Only a very important issue could call me from London at present."

"Important!" Our visitor threw up his hands. "Have you heard nothing of the abduction of the only son of the Duke of Holdernesse?"

"What! The late Cabinet Minister?"

"Exactly. We had tried to keep it out of the papers, but there was some rumor in the *Globe* last night. I thought it might have reached your ears."

Holmes shot out his long, thin arm and picked out Volume "H" in his encyclopedia of reference.

" 'Holdernesse, sixth Duke, K.G., P.C.'—half the alphabet! 'Baron Beverley, Earl of Carston' —dear me, what a list! 'Lord-Lieutenant of Hallamshire since 1900. Married Edith, daughter of Sir Charles Appledore, 1888. Heir and only child, Lord Saltire. Owns about two hundred and fifty thousand acres. Miner-

als in Lancashire and Wales. Address: Carlton House Terrace; Holdernesse Hall, Hallamshire; Carston Castle, Bangor, Wales. Lord of the Admiralty, 1872; Chief Secretary of State for—' Well, well, this man is certainly one of the greatest subjects of the Crown!"

"The greatest and perhaps the wealthiest. I am aware, Mr. Holmes, that you take a very high line in professional matters, and that you are prepared to work for the work's sake. I may tell you, however, that his Grace has already intimated that a check for five thousand pounds will be handed over to the person who can tell him where his son is, and another thousand to him who can name the man, or men, who have taken him."

"It is a princely offer," said Holmes. "Watson, I think that we shall accompany Dr. Huxtable back to the North of England. And now, Dr. Huxtable, when you have consumed that milk, you will kindly tell me what has happened, when it happened, how it happened, and, finally, what Dr. Thorneycroft Huxtable, of the Priory School, near Mackleton, has to do with the matter, and why he comes three days after an event—the state of your chin gives the date—to ask for my humble services."

Our visitor had consumed his milk and biscuits. The light had come back to his eyes and the color to his cheeks as he set himself with great vigor and lucidity to explain the situation.

"I must inform you, gentlemen, that the Priory is a preparatory school, of which I am the founder and principal. *Huxtable's Sidelights on Horace* may possibly recall my name to your memories. The Priory is, without exception, the best and most select preparatory school in England. Lord Leverstoke, the Earl of Blackwater, Sir Cathcart Soames—they all have entrusted their sons to me. But I felt that my school had reached its zenith when, three weeks ago, the Duke of Holdernesse sent Mr. James Wilder, his secretary, with the intimation that young Lord Saltire, ten years old, his only son and heir, was about to be committed to my charge. Little did I think that this would be the prelude to the most crushing misfortune of my life.

"On May 1 the boy arrived, that being the beginning of the summer term. He was a charming youth, and he soon fell into our ways. I may tell you—I trust that I am not indiscreet; half-confidences are absurd in such a case—that he was not entirely happy at home. It is an open secret that the duke's married life had not been a peaceful one, and the matter had ended in a separation by mutual consent, the duchess taking up her

residence in the South of France. This had occurred very shortly before, and the boy's sympathies are known to have been strongly with his mother. He moped after her departure from Holdernesse Hall, and it was for this reason that the duke desired to send him to my establishment. In a fortnight the boy was quite at home with us, and was apparently absolutely happy.

"He was last seen on the night of May 13—that is, the night of last Monday. His room was on the second floor, and was approached through another larger room in which two boys were sleeping. These boys saw and heard nothing, so that it is certain that young Saltire did not pass out that way. His window was open, and there is a stout ivy plant leading to the ground. We could trace no footmarks below, but it is sure that this is the only possible exit.

"His absence was discovered at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning. His bed had been slept in. He had dressed himself fully before going off in his usual school suit of black Eton jacket and dark gray trousers. There were no signs that anyone had entered the room, and it is quite certain that anything in the nature of cries or a struggle would have been heard, since Caunter, the elder boy in the inner room, is a very light sleeper.

"When Lord Saltire's disappearance was discovered I at once called a roll of the whole establishment — boys, masters, and servants. It was then that we ascertained that Lord Saltire had not been alone in his flight. Heidegger, the German master, was missing. His room was on the second floor, at the farther end of the building, facing the same way as Lord Saltire's. His bed had also been slept in; but he had apparently gone away partly dressed, since his shirt and socks were lying on the floor. He had undoubtedly let himself down by the ivy, for we could see the marks of his feet where he had landed on the lawn. His bicycle was kept in a small shed beside this lawn, and it also was gone.

"He had been with me for two years, and came with the best references; but he was a silent, morose man, not very popular either with masters or boys. No trace could be found of the fugitives, and now on Thursday morning we are as ignorant as we were on Tuesday. Inquiry was, of course, made at once at Holdernesse Hall. It is only a few miles away, and we imagined that in some sudden attack of homesickness he had gone back to his father; but nothing had been heard of him. The duke is greatly agitated—and as to me, you have seen yourselves the state of nervous prostration to which the suspense and the

responsibility have reduced me. Mr. Holmes, if ever you put forward your full powers, I implore you to do so now, for never in your life could you have a case which is more worthy of them."

Sherlock Holmes had listened with the utmost intentness to the statement of the unhappy schoolmaster. His drawn brows and the deep furrow between them showed that he needed no exhortation to concentrate all his attention upon a problem which, apart from the tremendous interests involved, must appeal so directly to his love of the complex and the unusual. He now drew out his notebook and jotted down one or two memoranda.

"You have been very remiss in not coming to me sooner," said he severely. "You start me on my investigation with a very serious handicap. It is inconceivable, for example, that this ivy and this lawn would have yielded nothing to an expert observer."

"I am not to blame, Mr. Holmes. His Grace was extremely desirous to avoid all public scandal. He was afraid of his family unhappiness being dragged before the world. He has a deep horror of anything of the kind."

"But there has been some official investigation?"

"Yes, sir, and it has proved most disappointing. An apparent clue was at once obtained, since a boy and a young man were reported to have been seen leaving a neighboring station by an early train. Only last night we had news that the couple had been hunted down in Liverpool, and they prove to have no connection whatever with the matter in hand. Then it was that in my despair and disappointment, after a sleepless night, I came straight to you by the early train."

"I suppose the local investigation was relaxed while this false clue was being followed up?"

"It was entirely dropped."

"So that three days have been wasted. The affair has been most deplorably handled."

"I feel it, and admit it."

"And yet the problem should be capable of ultimate solution. I shall be very happy to look into it. Have you been able to trace any connection between the missing boy and this German master?"

"None at all."

"Was he in the master's class?"

"No; he never exchanged a word with him, so far as I know."

"That is certainly very singular. Had the boy a bicycle?"

"No."

"Was any other bicycle missing?"

"No."

"Is that certain?"

"Quite."

"Well, now, you do not mean to seriously suggest that this German rode off upon a bicycle in the dead of the night bearing the boy in his arms?"

"Certainly not."

"Then what is the theory in your mind?"

"The bicycle may have been a blind. It may have been hidden somewhere, and the pair gone off on foot."

"Quite so; but it seems rather an absurd blind, does it not? Were there other bicycles in this shed?"

"Several."

"Would he not have hidden *a couple* had he desired to give the idea that they had gone off upon them?"

"I suppose he would."

"Of course he would. The blind theory won't do. But the incident is an admirable starting-point for an investigation. After all, a bicycle is not an easy thing to conceal or to destroy. One other question. Did anyone call to see the boy on the day before he disappeared?"

"No."

"Did he get any letters?"

"Yes; one letter."

"From whom?"

"From his father."

"Do you open the boys' letters?"

"No."

"How do you know it was from the father?"

"The coat of arms was on the envelope, and it was addressed in the duke's peculiar stiff hand. Besides, the duke remembers having written."

"When had he a letter before that?"

"Not for several days."

"Had he ever one from France?"

"No; never."

"You see the point of my questions, of course. Either the boy was carried off by force or he went of his own free will. In the latter case you would expect that some prompting from outside would be needed to make so young a lad do such a thing. If he has had no visitors, that prompting must have come in letters. Hence I try to find out who were his correspondents."

"I fear I cannot help you much. His only correspondent, so far as I know, was his own father."

"Who wrote to him on the very day of his disappearance. Were the relations between father and son very friendly?"

"His Grace is never very friendly with anyone. He is completely immersed in large public questions, and is rather inaccessible to all ordinary emotions. But he was always kind to the boy in his own way."

"But the sympathies of the latter were with the mother?"

"Yes."

"Did he say so?"

"No."

"The duke, then?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Then tell me how could you know?"

"I have had some confidential talk with Mr. James Wilder, his Grace's secreatry. It was he who gave me the information about Lord Saltire's feelings."

"I see. By the way, that last letter of the duke's—was it found in the boy's room after he was gone?"

"No; he had taken it with him. I think, Mr. Holmes, it is time we were leaving for Euston."

"I will order a four-wheeler. In a quarter of an hour we shall be at your service. If you are telegraphing home, Mr. Huxtable, it would be well to allow the people in your neighborhood to imagine that the inquiry is still going on in Liverpool, or wherever else that red herring led your pack. In the meantime I will do a little quiet work at your own doors, and perhaps the scent is not so cold but that two old hounds like Watson and myself may get a sniff of it."

That evening found us in the cold, bracing atmosphere of the Peak country, in which Dr. Huxtable's famous school is situated. It was already dark when we reached it. A card was lying on the hall table, and the butler whispered something to his master, who turned to us with agitation in every heavy feature.

"The duke is here," said he. "The duke and Mr. Wilder are in the study. Come, gentlemen, and I will introduce you."

I was, of course, familiar with the pictures of the famous statesman, but the man himself was very different from his representation. He was a tall and stately person, scrupulously dressed, with a drawn, thin face, and a nose which was grotesquely curved and long. His complexion was of a dead pallor, which was more startling by contrast with a long, dwindling beard of vivid red, which flowed down over his white waistcoat, with his watch-chain gleaming through its fringe. Such was the stately presence who looked stonily at us from the center of Dr. Huxtable's hearthrug. Beside him stood a very young man, whom I understood to be Wilder, the private secretary. He was small, nervous, alert, with intelligent, light blue eyes and mobile features.

It was he who at once, in an incisive and positive tone, opened the conversation.

"I called this morning, Dr. Huxtable, too late to prevent you from starting for London. I learned that your object was to invite Mr. Sherlock Holmes to undertake the conduct of this case. His Grace is surprised, Dr. Huxtable, that you should have

taken such a step without consulting him."

"When I learned the police had failed—"

"His Grace is by no means convinced that the police have failed."

"But surely, Mr. Wilder—"

"You are well aware, Dr. Huxtable, that his Grace is particularly anxious to avoid all public scandal. He prefers to take as few people as possible into his confidence."

"The matter can be easily remedied," said the brow-beaten doctor. "Mr. Sherlock Holmes can return to London by the morning train."

"Hardly that, doctor, hardly that," said Holmes, in his blandest voice. "This northern air is invigorating and pleasant, so I propose to spend a few days upon your moors, and to occupy my mind as best I may. Whether I have the shelter of your roof or of the village inn is, of course, for you to decide."

I could see that the unfortunate doctor was in the last stage of indecision, from which he was rescued by the deep, sonorous voice of the red-bearded duke, which boomed out like a dinner-gong.

"I agree with Mr. Wilder, Dr. Huxtable, that you would have done wisely to consult me. But since Mr. Holmes has already been taken into your confidence, it would indeed be absurd that we should not avail ourselves of his services. Far from going to the inn, Mr. Holmes, I should be pleased if you would come and stay with me at Holdernesse Hall."

"I thank your Grace. For the purposes of my investigation I think that it would be wiser for me to remain at the scene of the mystery."

"Just as you like, Mr. Holmes. Any information which Mr. Wilder or I can give you is, of course, at your disposal."

"It will probably be necessary for me to see you at the Hall," said Holmes. "I would only ask you now, sir, whether you have formed any explanation in your own mind as to the mysterious disappearance of your son?"

"No, sir, I have not."

"Excuse me if I allude to that which is painful to you, but I have no alternative. Do you think that the duchess had anything to do with the matter?"

The great minister showed perceptible hesitation.

"I do not think so," he said at last.

"The other most obvious explanation is that the child had been kidnapped for the purpose of levying ransom. You have not had any demand of the sort?"

"No, sir."

"One more question, your Grace. I understand that you wrote to your son upon the day when this incident occurred."

"No. I wrote upon the day before."

"Exactly. But he received it on that day?"

"Yes."

"Was there anything in your letter which might have unbalanced him or induced him to take such a step?"

"No, sir, certainly not."

"Did you post that letter yourself?"

The nobleman's reply was interrupted by his secretary, who broke in with some heat.

"His Grace is not in the habit of posting letters himself," said he. "This letter was laid with others upon the study table, and I myself put them in the postbag."

"You are sure this one was among them?"

"Yes; I observed it."

"How many letters did your Grace write that day?"

"Twenty or thirty. I have a large correspondence. But surely this is somewhat irrelevant?"

"Not entirely," said Holmes.

"For my own part," the duke continued, "I have advised the police to turn their attention to the South of France. I have already said that I do not believe that the duchess would encourage so monstrous an action, but the lad had the most wrongheaded opinions, and it is possible that he may have fled to her, aided and abetted by this German. I think, Dr. Huxtable, that we will now return to the Hall."

I could see that there were other questions which Holmes would have wished to put; but the nobleman's abrupt manner showed that the interview was at an end. It was evident that to his intensely aristocratic nature this discussion of his intimate family affairs with a stranger was most abhorrent, and that he feared lest every fresh question would throw a fiercer light into the discreetly shadowed corners of his ducal history.

When the nobleman and his secretary had left, my friend flung himself at once with characteristic eagerness into the investigation.

The boy's chamber was carefully examined, and yielded nothing save the absolute conviction that it was only through the window that he could have escaped. The German master's room and effects gave no further clue. In his case a trailer of ivy had given way under his weight, and we saw by the light of a lantern the mark on the lawn where his heels had come down. That one dent in the short green grass was the only material witness left of this inexplicable nocturnal flight.

Sherlock Holmes left the house alone, and only returned after eleven. He had obtained a large ordinance map of the neighborhood, and this he

brought into my room, where he laid it out on the bed, and, having balanced the lamp in the middle of it, he began to smoke over it, and occasionally to point out objects of interest with the reeking amber of his pipe.

"This case grows upon me, Watson," said he. "There are decidedly some points of interest in connection with it. In this early stage I want you to realize these geographical features, which may have a good deal to do with our investigation.

"Look at this map. This dark square is the Priory School. I'll put a pin in it. Now, this line is the main road. You see that it runs east and west past the school, and you see also there is no side road for a mile either way. If these two folk passed away by road it was *this* road."

"Exactly."

"By a singular and happy chance we are able to some extent to check what passed along this road during the night in question. At this point, where my pipe is now resting, a country constable was on duty from twelve to six. It is, as you perceive, the first cross road on the east side. This man declares that he was not absent from his post for an instant, and he is positive that neither boy nor man could have gone that way unseen. I have spoken with this policeman tonight, and he appears to me to be a perfectly reliable person. That blocks this end. We have now to deal with the other. There is an inn here, the 'Red Bull,' the landlady of which was ill. She had sent to Mackleton for a doctor, but he did not arrive until morning, being absent at another case. The people at the inn were alert all night, awaiting his coming, and one or other of them seems to have continually had an eye upon the road. They declare that no one passed. If their evidence is good, then we are fortunate enough to be able to block the west, and also to be able to say that the fugitives did *not* use the road at all."

"But the bicycle?" I objected.

"Quite so. We will come to the bicycle presently. To continue our reasoning: if these people did not go by the road, they must have traversed the country to the north of the house or to the south of the house. That is certain. Let us weigh the one against the other. On the south of the house is, as you perceive, a large district of arable land, cut up into small fields, with stone walls between them. There, I admit that a bicycle is impossible. We can dismiss the idea. We turn to the country on the north. Here there lies a grove of trees, marked as the 'Ragged Shaw,' and on the farther side stretches a great rolling moor, Lower Gill Moor, extending for ten miles, and sloping gradually

upwards. Here, at one side of this wilderness, is Holdernesse Hall, ten miles by road, but only six across the moor. It is a peculiarly desolate plain. A few moor farmers have small holdings, where they rear sheep and cattle. Except these, the plover and the curlew are the only inhabitants until you come to the Chesterfield high road. There is a church there, you see, a few cottages, and an inn. Beyond that the hills become precipitous. Surely it is here to the north that our quest must lie."

"But the bicycle?" I persisted.

"Well, well!" said Holmes impatiently. "A good cyclist does not need a high road. The moor is intersected with paths, and the moon was at the full. Halloa! What is this?"

There was an agitated knock at the door, and an instant afterwards Dr. Huxtable was in the room. In his hand he held a blue cricket-cap, with a white chevron on the peak.

"At last we have a clue!" he cried. "Thank Heaven, at last we are on the dear boy's track! It is his cap."

"Where was it found?"

"In the van of gipsies who camped on the moor. They left on Tuesday. Today the police traced them down and examined their caravan. This was found."

"How do they account for it?"

"They shuffled and lied—said that they found it on the moor on Tuesday morning. They know where he is, the rascals! Thank goodness, they are all safe under lock and key. Either the fear of the law or the duke's purse will certainly get out of them all that they know."

"So far, so good," said Holmes, when the doctor had at last left the room. "It at least bears out the theory that it is on the side of the Lower Gill Moor that we must hope for results. The police have really done nothing locally, save the arrest of these gipsies. Look here, Watson! There is a watercourse across the moor. You see it marked here in the map. In some parts it widens into a morass. This is particularly so in the region between Holdernesse Hall and the school. It is vain to look elsewhere for tracks in this dry weather; but at *that* point there is certainly a chance of some record being left. I will call you early tomorrow morning, and you and I will try if we can throw some light upon the mystery."

The day was just breaking when I woke to find the long, thin form of Holmes by my bedside. He was fully dressed, and had apparently already been out.

"I have done the lawn and the bicycle shed," said he. "I have also had a ramble through the Ragged Shaw. Now, Watson, there is cocoa ready in the next

room. I must beg you to hurry, for we have a great day before us."

His eyes shone, and his cheek was flushed with the exhilaration of the master workman who sees his work lies ready before him. A very different Holmes, this active, alert man, from the introspective and pallid dreamer of Baker Street. I felt, as I looked upon that supple figure, alive with nervous energy, that it was indeed a strenuous day that awaited us.

And yet it opened in the blackest disappointment. With high hopes we struck across the peaty, russet moor, intersected with a thousand sheep-paths, until we came to the broad, light-green belt which marked the morass between us and Holdernesse. Certainly, if the lad had gone homewards, he must have passed this, and he would not pass it without leaving his trace. But no sign of him or the German could be seen. With a darkening face my friend strode along the margin, eagerly observant of every muddy stain upon the mossy surface. Sheepmarks there were in profusion, and at one place, some miles down, cows had left their tracks. Nothing more.

"Check number one," said Holmes, looking gloomily over the rolling expanse of the moor. "There is another morass down yonder, and a narrow neck between. Halloa! halloa! halloa! What have we here?"

We had come on a small black ribbon of pathway. In the middle of it, clearly marked on the sodden soil, was the track of a bicycle.

"Hurrah!" I cried. "We have it."

But Holmes was shaking his head, and his face was puzzled and expectant rather than joyous.

"A bicycle certainly, but not *the* bicycle," said he. "I am familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tires. This, as you perceive, is a Dunlop, with a patch upon the outer cover. Heidegger's tires were Palmers, leaving longitudinal stripes. Aveling, the mathematical master, was sure upon the point. Therefore it is not Heidegger's track."

"The boy's, then?"

"Possibly, if we could prove a bicycle to have been in his possession. But this we have utterly failed to do. This track, as you perceive, was made by a rider who was going from the direction of the school."

"Or towards it?"

"No, no, my dear Watson. The more deeply sunk impression is, of course, the hind wheel, upon which the weight rests. You perceive several places where it has passed across and obliterated the more shallow mark of the front one. It was undoubtedly heading away from

the school. It may or may not be connected with our inquiry, but we will follow it backwards before we go any farther."

We did so, and at the end of a few hundred yards lost the tracks as we emerged from the boggy portion of the moor. Following the path backwards, we picked out another spot, where a spring trickled across it. Here, once again, was the mark of the bicycle, though nearly obliterated by the hoofs of cows. After that there was no sign, but the path ran right on into Ragged Shaw, the wood which backed on to the school. From this wood the cycle must have emerged. Holmes sat down on a boulder and rested his chin in his hands. I had smoked two cigarettes before he moved.

"Well, well," said he at last. "It is, of course, possible that a cunning man might change the tyre of his bicycle in order to leave unfamiliar tracks. A criminal who was capable of such a thought is a man whom I should be proud to do business with. We will leave this question undecided and hark back to our morass again, for we have left a good deal unexplored."

We continued our systematic survey of the edge of the sodden portion of the moor, and soon our perseverance was gloriously rewarded.

Right across the lower part of the bog lay a miry path. Holmes gave a cry of delight as he approached it. An impression like a fine bundle of telegraph wires ran down the center of it. It was the Palmer tire.

"Here is Herr Heidegger, sure enough!" cried Holmes exultantly. "My reasoning seems to have been pretty sound, Watson."

"I congratulate you."

"But we have a long way still to go. Kindly walk clear of the path. Now let us follow the trail. I fear that it will not lead very far."

We found, however, as we advanced, that this portion of the moor is intersected with soft patches, and, though we frequently lost sight of the track, we always succeeded in picking it up once more.

"Do you observe," said Holmes, "that the rider is now undoubtedly forcing the pace? There can be no doubt of it. Look at this impression, where you get both tires clear. The one is as deep as the other. That can only mean that the rider is throwing his weight on to the handle-bar as a man does when he is sprinting. By Jove! he has had a fall."

There was a broad, irregular smudge covering some yards of the track. Then there were a few footmarks, and the tire reappeared once more.

"A side-slip," I suggested.

Holmes held up a crumpled

branch of flowering gorse. To my horror I perceived that the yellow blossoms were all dabbled with crimson. On the path, too, and among the heather were dark stains of clotted blood.

"Bad!" said Holmes. "Bad! Stand clear, Watson! Not an unnecessary footstep! What do I read here? He fell wounded, he stood up, he remounted, he proceeded. But there is no other track. Cattle on this side path. He was surely not gored by a bull? Impossible! But I see no traces of anyone else. We must push on, Watson. Surely, with stains as well as the track to guide us, he cannot escape us now."

Our search was not a very long one. The tracks of the tire began to curve fantastically upon the wet and shining path. Suddenly, as I looked ahead, the gleam of metal caught my eye from amid the thick gorse bushes. Out of them we dragged a bicycle. Palmer-tired, one pedal bent, and the whole front of it horribly smeared and slobbered with blood. On the other side of the bushes a shoe was projecting. We ran round, and there lay the unfortunate rider. He was a tall man, full bearded, with spectacles, one glass of which had been knocked out. The cause of his death was a frightful blow upon the head, which had crushed in part of his skull. That he could have gone on after receiving such an injury said much for the vitality and courage of the man. He wore shoes, but no socks, and his open coat disclosed a nightshirt beneath it. It was undoubtedly the German master.

Holmes turned the body over reverently, and examined it with great attention. He then sat in deep thought for a time, and I could see by his ruffled brow that this grim discovery had not, in his opinion, advanced us much in our inquiry.

"It is a little difficult to know what to do, Watson," said he, at last. "My own inclinations are to push this inquiry on, for we have already lost so much time that we cannot afford to waste another hour. On the other hand, we are bound to inform the police of this discovery, and to see that this poor fellow's body is looked after."

"I could take a note back."

"But I need your company and assistance. Wait a bit! There is a fellow cutting peat up yonder. Bring him over here, and he will guide the police."

I brought the peasant across, and Holmes dispatched the frightened man with a note to Dr. Huxtable.

"Now, Watson," said he, "we have picked up two clues this morning. One is the bicycle with the Palmer tire, and we see what that has led to. The other is the bicycle with the patched Dunlop. Before we start to investigate

that, let us try to realize what we *do* know, so as to make the most of it, and to separate the essential from the accidental.

"First of all, I wish to impress upon you that the boy certainly left of his own free will. He got down from his window and he went off, either alone or with someone. That is sure."

I assented.

"Well, now, let us turn to this unfortunate German master. The boy was fully dressed when he fled. Therefore he foresaw what he would do. But the German went without his socks. He certainly acted on very short notice."

"Undoubtedly."

"Why did he go? Because, from his bedroom window, he saw the flight of the boy. Because he wished to overtake him and bring him back. He seized his bicycle, pursued the lad, and in pursuing him met his death."

"So it would seem."

"Now I come to the critical part of my argument. The natural action of a man in pursuing a little boy would be to run after him. He would know that he could overtake him. But the German does not do so. He turns to his bicycle. I am told that he was an excellent cyclist. He would not do this if he did not see that the boy had some swift means of escape."

"The other bicycle."

"Let us continue our reconstruction. He meets his death five miles from the school—not by a bullet, mark you, which even a lad might conceivably discharge, but by a savage blow dealt by a vigorous arm. The lad, then, *had* a companion in his flight. And the flight was a swift one, since it took five miles before an expert cyclist could overtake them. Yet we survey the ground around the scene of the tragedy. What do we find? A few cattle tracks, nothing more. I took a wide sweep round, and there is no path within fifty yards. Another cyclist could have had nothing to do with the actual murder. Nor were there any human footmarks."

"Holmes," I cried, "this is impossible."

"Admirable!" he said. "A most illuminating remark. It *is* impossible as I state it, and therefore I must in some respect have stated it wrong. Yet you saw for yourself. Can you suggest any fallacy?"

"He could not have fractured his skull in a fall?"

"In a morass, Watson?"

"I am at my wits' end."

"Tut, tut; we have solved some worse problems. At least we have plenty of material, if we can only use it. Come, then, and, having exhausted the Palmer, let us see what the Dunlop with the patched cover have to offer us."

We picked up the track and

followed it onwards for some distance; but soon the moor rose into a long, heather-tufted curve, and we left the watercourse behind us. No further help from tracks could be hoped for. At the spot where we saw the last of the Dunlop tire, it might equally have led to Holdernesse Hall, the stately towers of which rose some miles to our left, or to a low, gray village which lay in front of us, and marked the position of the Chesterfield high road.

As we approached the forbidding and squalid inn, with the sign of a game-cock above the door, Holmes gave a sudden groan and clutched me by the shoulder to save himself from falling. He had had one of those violent strains of the ankle which leave a man helpless. With difficulty he limped up to the door, where a squat, dark, elderly man was smoking a black clay pipe.

"How are you, Mr. Reuben Hayes?" said Holmes.

"Who are you, and how do you get my name so pat?" the countryman answered, with a suspicious flash of a pair of cunning eyes.

"Well, it's printed on the board above your head. It's easy to see a man who is master of his own house. I suppose you haven't such a thing as a carriage in your stables?"

"No; I have not."

"I can hardly put my foot to the ground."

"Don't put it to the ground."

"But I can't walk."

"Well, then, hop."

Mr. Reuben Hayes' manner was far from gracious, but Holmes took it with admirable good humor.

"Look here, my man," said he. "This is really rather an awkward fix for me. I don't mind how I get on."

"Neither do I," said the morose landlord.

"The matter is very important. I would offer you a sovereign for the use of a bicycle."

The landlord pricked up his ears.

"Where do you want to go?"

"To Holdernesse Hall."

"Pals of the dook, I suppose?" said the landlord, surveying our mud-stained garments with ironical eyes.

Holmes laughed good-naturedly.

"He'll be glad to see us, anyhow."

"Why?"

"Because we bring him news of his lost son."

The landlord gave a very visible start.

"What, you're on his track?"

"He has been heard of in Liverpool. They expect to get him every hour."

Again a swift change passed over the heavy, unshaven face. His manner was suddenly genial.

"I've less reason to wish the dook well than most men," said he, "for I was his coachman once, and cruel bad he treated me. It was him that sacked me without a character on the word of a lying corn-chandler. But I'm glad to hear that the young lord was heard of in Liverpool, and I'll help you to take the news to the Hall."

"Thank you," said Holmes. "We'll have some food first. Then you can bring round the bicycle."

"I haven't got a bicycle."

Holmes held up a sovereign.

"I tell you, man, that I haven't got one. I'll let you have two horses as far as the Hall."

"Well, well," said Holmes, "we'll talk about it when we've had something to eat."

When we were left alone in the stone-flagged kitchen it was astonishing how rapidly that sprained ankle recovered. It was nearly nightfall, and we had eaten nothing since early morning, so that we spent some time over our meal. Holmes was lost in thought, and once or twice he walked over to the window and stared earnestly out. It opened on to a squalid courtyard. In the far corner was a smithy, where a grimy lad was at work. On the other side were the stables. Holmes had sat down again after one of these excursions, when he suddenly sprang out of his chair with a loud exclamation.

"By Heaven, Watson, I believe that I've got it!" he cried. "Yes, yes, it must be so. Watson, do you remember seeing any cow-tracks today?"

"Yes, several."

"Where?"

"Well, everywhere. They were at the morass, and again on the path, and again where poor Heidegger met his death."

"Exactly. Well, now, Watson, how many cows did you see on the moor?"

"I don't remember seeing any."

"Strange, Watson, that we should see tracks all along our line, but never a cow on the whole moor; very strange, Watson, eh?"

"Yes, it is strange."

"Now, Watson, make an effort; throw your mind back! Can you see those tracks upon the path?"

"Yes, I can."

"Can you recall that the tracks were sometimes like that, Watson"—he arranged a number of breadcrumbs in this fashion—: : : : :—"and sometimes like this"—: · : · : · : ·—"and occasionally like this"—. · . · . —"Can you remember that?"

"No, I cannot."

"But I can. I could swear to it. However, we will go back at our leisure and verify it. What a

blind beetle I have been not to draw my conclusion!"

"And what is your conclusion?"

"Only that it is a remarkable cow which walks, canters, and gallops. By George, Watson, it was no brain of a country publican that thought out such a blind as that! The coast seems to be clear, save for that lad in the smithy. Let us slip out and see what we can see."

There were two rough-haired, unkempt horses in the tumble-down stable. Holmes raised the hind leg of one of them and laughed aloud.

"Old shoes, but newly shod—old shoes, but new nails. This case deserves to be a classic. Let us go across to the smithy."

The lad continued his work without regarding us. I saw Holmes's eye darting to right and left among the litter of iron and wood which was scattered about the floor. Suddenly, however, we heard a step behind us, and there was the landlord, his heavy eyebrows drawn down over his savage eyes, his swarthy features convulsed with passion.

He held a short metal-headed stick in his hand, and he advanced in so menacing a fashion that I was right glad to feel the revolver in my pocket.

"You infernal spies!" the man cried. "What are you doing there?"

"Why, Mr. Reuben Hayes," said Holmes coolly, "one might think that you were afraid of our finding something out."

The man mastered himself with a violent effort, and his grim mouth loosened into a false laugh, which was more menacing than his frown.

"You're welcome to all you can find out in my smithy," said he. "But look here, mister, I don't care for folk poking about my place without my leave, so the sooner you pay your score and get out of this the better I shall be pleased."

"All right, Mr. Hayes—no harm meant," said Holmes. "We have been having a look at your horses; but I think I'll walk after all. It's not far, I believe."

"Not more than two miles to the Hall gates. That's the road to the left." He watched us with sullen eyes until we had left his premises.

We did not go very far along the road, for Holmes stopped the instant that the curve hid us from the landlord's view.

"We were warm, as the children say, at that inn," said he. "I seem to grow colder every step that I take away from it. No, no; I can't possibly leave it."

"I am convinced," said I, "that this Reuben Hayes knows all about it. A more self-evident villain I never saw."

"Oh! he impressed you in that way, did he? There are the horses, there is the smithy. Yes,

it is an interesting place, this 'Fighting Cock.' I think we shall have another look at it in an unobtrusive way."

A long, sloping hillside, dotted with gray limestone boulders, stretched behind us. We had turned off the road, and were making our way up the hill, when, looking in the direction of Holdernesse Hall, I saw a cyclist coming swiftly along.

"Get down, Watson!" cried Holmes, with a heavy hand upon my shoulder. We had hardly sunk from view when the man flew past us on the road. Amid a rolling cloud of dust I caught a glimpse of a pale, agitated face —a face with horror in every lineament, the mouth open, the eyes staring wildly in front. It was like some strange caricature of the dapper James Wilder whom we had seen the night before.

"The duke's secretary!" cried Holmes. "Come, Watson, let us see what he does."

We scrambled from rock to rock until in a few moments we had made our way to a point from which we could see the front door of the inn. Wilder's bicycle was leaning against the wall beside it. No one was moving about the house, nor could we catch a glimpse of any faces at the windows. Slowly the twilight crept down as the sun sank behind the high towers of Holdernesse Hall. Then in the gloom we saw the two side-lamps of a trap light up in the stable-yard of the inn, and shortly afterwards heard the rattle of hoofs, as it wheeled out into the road and tore off at a furious pace in the direction of Chesterfield.

"What do you make of that, Watson?" Holmes whispered.

"It looks like a flight."

"A single man in a dog-cart, so far as I could see. Well, it certainly was not Mr. James Wilder, for there he is at the door."

A red square of light had sprung out of the darkness. In the middle of it was the black figure of the secretary, his head advanced, peering out into the night. It was evident that he was expecting someone. Then at last there were steps in the road, a second figure was visible for an instant against the light, the door shut, and all was black once more.

Five minutes later a lamp was lit in the room upon the first floor.

"It seems to be a curious class of custom that is done by the 'Fighting Cock,' " said Holmes.

"The bar is on the other side."

"Quite so. These are what one may call the private guests. Now, what in the world is Mr. James Wilder doing in that den at this hour of night, and who is the companion who comes to meet him there? Come, Watson, we must really take a risk and try

to investigate this a little more closely."

Together we stole down to the road and crept across to the door of the inn. The bicycle still leaned against the wall. Holmes struck a match and held it to the back wheel, and I heard him chuckle as the light fell upon a patched Dunlop tire. Up above us was the lighted window.

"I must have a peep through that, Watson. If you bend your back and support yourself upon the wall, I think that I can manage."

An instant later his feet were on my shoulders. But he was hardly up before he was down again.

"Come, my friend," said he, "our day's work has been quite long enough. I think that we have gathered all that we can. It's a long walk to the school, and the sooner we get started the better."

He hardly opened his lips during that weary trudge across the moor, nor would he enter the school when he reached it, but went on to Mackleton Station, whence he could send some telegrams. Late at night I heard him consoling Dr. Huxtable, prostrated by the tragedy of his master's death, and later still he entered my room as alert and vigorous as he had been when he started in the morning. "All goes well, my friend," said he. "I promise that before tomorrow evening we shall have reached the solution of the mystery."

At eleven o'clock next morning my friend and I were walking up the famous yew avenue of Holdernesse Hall. We were ushered through the magnificent Elizabethan doorway and into his Grace's study. There we found Mr. James Wilder, demure and courtly, but with some trace of that wild terror of the night before still lurking in his furtive eyes and in his twitching features.

"You have come to see his Grace? I am sorry; but the fact is that the duke is far from well. He has been very much upset by the tragic news. We received a telegram from Dr. Huxtable yesterday afternoon, which told us of your discovery."

"I must see the duke, Mr. Wilder."

"But he is in his room."

"Then I must go to his room."

"I believe he is in his bed."

"I will see him there."

Holmes's cold and inexorable manner showed the secretary that it was useless to argue with him.

"Very good, Mr. Holmes; I will tell him that you are here."

After half an hour's delay the great nobleman appeared. His face was more cadaverous than ever, his shoulders had rounded, and he seemed to me to be an altogether older man than he had been the morning before. He

greeted us with a stately courtesy, and seated himself at his desk, his red beard streaming down on to the table.

"Well, Mr. Holmes?" said he.

But my friend's eyes were fixed upon the secretary, who stood by his master's chair.

"I think, your Grace, that I could speak more freely in Mr. Wilder's absence."

The man turned a shade paler and cast a malignant glance at Holmes.

"If your Grace wishes—"

"Yes, yes; you had better go. Now, Mr. Holmes, what have you to say?"

My friend waited until the door had closed behind the retreating secretary.

"The fact is, your Grace," said he, "that my colleague, Dr. Watson, and myself had an assurance from Dr. Huxtable that a reward had been offered in this case. I should like to have this confirmed from your own lips."

"Certainly, Mr. Holmes."

"It amounted, if I am correctly informed, to five thousand pounds to anyone who will tell you where your son is?"

"Exactly."

"And another thousand to the man who will name the person or persons who keep him in custody?"

"Exactly."

"Under the latter heading is included, no doubt, not only those who may have taken him away, but also those who conspire to keep him in his present position?"

"Yes, yes," cried the duke impatiently. "If you do your work well, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, you will have no reason to complain of niggardly treatment."

My friend rubbed his thin hands together with an appearance of avidity which was a surprise to me, who knew his frugal tastes.

"I fancy that I see your Grace's check-book upon the table," said he. "I should be glad if you would make me out a check for six thousand pounds. It would be as well, perhaps, for you to cross it. The Capital and Counties Bank, Oxford Street branch, are my agents."

His Grace sat very stern and upright in his chair, and looked stonily at my friend.

"Is this a joke, Mr. Holmes? It is hardly a subject for pleasantry."

"Not at all, your Grace. I was never more earnest in my life."

"What do you mean, then?"

"I mean that I have earned the reward. I know where your son is, and I know some, at least, of those who are holding him."

The duke's beard had turned more aggressively red than ever against his ghastly white face.

"Where is he?" he gasped.

"He is, or was last night, at the Fighting Cock Inn, about two miles from your park gate."

The duke fell back in his chair.

"And whom do you accuse?"

Sherlock Holmes's answer was an astounding one. He stepped swiftly forward and touched the duke upon the shoulder.

"I accuse *you*," said he. "And now, your Grace, I'll trouble you for that check."

Never shall I forget the duke's appearance as he sprang up and clawed with his hand like one who is sinking into an abyss. Then, with an extraordinary effort of aristocratic self-command, he sat down and sank his face in his hands. It was some minutes before he spoke.

"How much do you know?" he asked at last, without raising his head.

"I saw you together last night."

"Does anyone else besides your friend know?"

"I have spoken to no one."

The duke took a pen in his quivering fingers and opened his check-book.

"I shall be as good as my word, Mr. Holmes. I am about to write your check, however unwelcome the information which you have gained may be to me. When the offer was first made I little thought the turn which events would take. But you and your friend are men of discretion, Mr. Holmes?"

"I hardly understand your Grace."

"I must put it plainly, Mr. Holmes. If only you two know of the incident, there is no reason why it should go any farther. I think twelve thousand pounds is the sum that I owe you, is it not?"

But Holmes smiled, and shook his head.

"I fear, your Grace, that matters can hardly be arranged so easily. There is the death of this schoolmaster to be accounted for."

"But James knew nothing of that. You cannot hold him responsible for that. It was the work of this brutal ruffian whom he had the misfortune to employ."

"I must take the view, your Grace, that when a man embarks upon a crime he is morally guilty of any other crime which may spring from it."

"Morally, Mr. Holmes. No doubt you are right. But surely not in the eyes of the law. A man cannot be condemned for a murder at which he was not present, and which he loathes and abhors as much as you do. The instant that he heard of it he made a complete confession to me, so filled was he with horror and remorse. He lost not an hour in breaking entirely with the murderer. Oh, Mr. Holmes, you must save him—you must save him! I tell you that you must save him!" The duke had dropped the last attempt at self-com-

mand, and was pacing the room with a convulsed face and with his clenched hands raving in the air. At last he mastered himself and sat down once more at his desk. "I appreciate your conduct in coming here before you spoke to anyone else," said he. "At least we may take counsel how far we can minimize this hideous scandal."

"Exactly," said Holmes. "I think, your Grace, that this can only be done by absolute and complete frankness between us. I am disposed to help your Grace to the best of my ability; but in order to do so I must understand to the last detail how the matter stands. I realize that your words applied to Mr. James Wilder, and that he is not the murderer."

"No; the murderer has escaped."

Sherlock Holmes smiled demurely.

"Your Grace can hardly have heard of any small reputation which I possess, or you would not imagine that it is so easy to escape me. Mr. Reuben Hayes was arrested at Chesterfield on my information at eleven o'clock last night. I had a telegram from the head of the local police before I left the school this morning."

The duke leaned back in his chair and stared with amazement at my friend.

"You seem to have powers that are hardly human," said he. "So Reuben Hayes is taken? I am right glad to hear it, if it will not react upon the fate of James."

"Your secretary?"

"No, sir; my son."

It was Holmes's turn to look astonished.

"I confess that this is entirely new to me, your Grace. I must beg of you to be more explicit."

"I will conceal nothing from you. I agree with you that complete frankness, however painful it may be to me, is the best policy in this desperate situation to which James's folly and jealousy have reduced us. When I was a young man, Mr. Holmes, I loved with such a love as comes only once in a lifetime. I offered the lady marriage, but she refused it on the grounds that such a match might mar my career. Had she lived I would certainly never have married anyone else. She died, and left this one child, whom for her sake I have cherished and cared for. I could not acknowledge the paternity to the world; but I gave him the best of educations, and since he came to manhood I have kept him near my person. He surprised my secret, and has presumed ever since upon the claim which he has upon me and upon his power of provoking a scandal, which would be abhorrent to me. His presence had something to do with the unhappy issue of my marriage. Above all, he hated

my young legitimate heir from the first with a persistent hatred. You may well ask me why, under these circumstances, I still kept James under my roof. I answer that it was because I could see his mother's face in his, and that for her dear sake there was no end to my long-suffering. All her pretty ways, too—there was not one of them which he could not suggest and bring back to my memory. I *could* not send him away. But I feared so lest he should do Arthur—that is, Lord Saltire—a mischief that I dispatched him for safety to Dr. Huxtable's school.

"James came into contact with this fellow Hayes because the man was a tenant of mine, and James acted as agent. The fellow was a rascal from the beginning; but in some extraordinary way James became intimate with him. He had always a taste for low company. When James determined to kidnap Lord Saltire it was of this man's service that he availed himself. You remember that I wrote to Arthur upon that last day. Well, James opened the letter and inserted a note asking Arthur to meet him in a little wood called the Ragged Shaw which is near to the school. He used the duchess' name, and in that way got the boy to come. That evening James cycled over—I am telling you what he has himself confessed to me—and he told Arthur, whom he met in the wood, that his mother longed to see him, that she was awaiting him on the moor, and that if he would come back into the wood at midnight he would find a man with a horse, who would take him to her. Poor Arthur fell into the trap. He came to the appointment, and found this fellow Hayes with a led pony. Arthur mounted, and they set off together. It appears—though this James only heard yesterday—that they were pursued, that Hayes struck the pursuer with his stick, and that the man died of his injuries. Hayes brought Arthur to his public-house the 'Fighting Cock,' where he was confined in an upper room, under the care of Mrs. Hayes, who is a kindly woman, but entirely under the control of her brutal husband.

"Well, Mr. Holmes, that was the state of affairs when I first saw you two days ago. I had no more idea of the truth than you. You will ask me what was James's motive in doing such a deed. I answer that there was a great deal which was unreasoning and fanatical in the hatred which he bore my heir. In his view he should himself have been heir of all my estates, and he deeply resented those social laws which made it impossible. He was eager that I should break the entail, and he was of the opinion that it lay in my power

to do so. He intended to make a bargain with me—to restore Arthur if I would break the entail, and so make it possible for the estate to be left to him by will. He knew well that I should never willingly invoke the aid of the police against him. I say that he would have proposed such a bargain to me, but he did not actually do so, for events moved too quickly for him, and he had not time to put his plans into practice.

"What brought all his wicked scheme to wreck was your discovery of this man Heidegger's dead body. James was seized with horror at the news. It came to us yesterday as we sat together in this study. Dr. Huxtable had sent a telegram. James was so overwhelmed with grief and agitation that my suspicions, which had never been entirely absent, rose instantly to a certainty, and I taxed him with the deed. He made a complete voluntary confession. Then he implored me to keep his secret for three days longer, so as to give his wretched accomplice a chance of saving his guilty life. I yielded—as I have always yielded—to his prayers, and instantly James hurried off to the 'Fighting Cock' to warn Hayes and give him the means of flight. I could not go there by daylight without provoking comment, but as soon as night fell I hurried off to see my dear Arthur. I found him safe and well, but horrified beyond expression by the dreadful deed he had witnessed. In deference to my promise, and much against my will, I consented to leave him there for three days under the charge of Mrs. Hayes, since it was evident that it was impossible to inform the police where he was without telling them also who was the murderer, and I could not see how that murderer could be punished without ruin to my unfortunate James. You asked for frankness, Mr. Holmes, and I have taken you at your word, for I have now told you everything without an attempt at circumlocution or concealment. Do you in your turn be as frank with me."

"I will," said Holmes. "In the first place, your Grace, I am bound to tell you that you have placed yourself in a most serious position in the eyes of the law. You have condoned a felony, and you have aided the escape of a murderer; for I cannot doubt that any money which was taken by James Wilder to aid his accomplice in his flight came from your Grace's purse."

The duke bowed his assent.

"This is indeed a most serious matter. Even more culpable, in my opinion, your Grace, is your attitude towards your younger son. You leave him in this den for three days."

"Under solemn promises—"

"What are promises to such

people as these? You have no guarantee that he will not be spirited away again. To humor your guilty elder son you have exposed your innocent younger son to imminent and unnecessary danger. It was a most unjustifiable action."

The proud lord of Holdernesse was not accustomed to be so rated in his own ducal hall. The blood flushed into his high forehead, but his conscience held him dumb.

"I will help you, but on one condition only. It is that you ring for the footman and let me give such orders as I like."

Without a word the duke pressed the electric button. A servant entered.

"You will be glad to hear," said Holmes, "that your young master is found. It is the duke's desire that the carriage shall go at once to the Fighting Cock Inn to bring Lord Saltire home."

"Now," said Holmes, when the rejoicing lackey had disappeared, "having secured the future we can afford to be more lenient with the past. I am not in an official position, and there is no reason, so long as the ends of justice are served, why I should disclose all that I know. As to Hayes I say nothing. The gallows awaits him, and I would do nothing to save him from it. What he will divulge I cannot tell, but I have no doubt that your Grace could make him understand that it is to his interest to be silent. From the police point of view he will have kidnapped the boy for purpose of ransom. If they do not themselves find it out, I see no reason why I should prompt them to take a broader view. I would warn your Grace, however, that the continued presence of Mr. James Wilder in your household can only lead to misfortune."

"I understand that, Mr. Holmes, and it is already settled that he shall leave me forever and go to seek his fortune in Australia."

"In that case, your Grace, since you have yourself stated that any unhappiness in your married life was caused by his presence, I would suggest that you make such amends as you can to the duchess, and that you try to resume those relations which have been so unhappily interrupted."

"That also I have arranged, Mr. Holmes. I wrote to the duchess this morning."

"In that case," said Holmes, rising, "I think that my friend and I can congratulate ourselves upon several most happy results from our little visit to the North. There is one other small point upon which I desire some light. This fellow Hayes had shod his horses with shoes which counterfeited the tracks of cows. Was it from Mr. Wilder that he learned so extraordinary a device?"

The duke stood in thought for a moment, with a look of intense surprise on his face. Then he opened a door and showed us into a large room furnished as a museum.

He led the way to a glass case in a corner, and pointed to the inscription.

"These shoes," it ran, "were dug up in the moat of Holdernesse Hall. They are for the use of horses; but they are shaped below with a cloven foot of iron, so as to throw pursuers off the track.

"They are supposed to have belonged to some of the maraud-ing Barons of Holdernesse in the Middle Ages."

Holmes opened the case, and, moistening his finger, he passed it along the shoe. A thin film of recent mud was left upon his skin.

"Thank you," said he, as he replaced the glass. "It is the second most interesting object that I have seen in the North."

"And the first?"

Holmes folded up his check, and placed it carefully in his notebook. "I am a poor man," said he, as he patted it affectionately, and thrust it into the depths of his inner pocket.

NEXT MONTH—

¶ Six feet tall Terrence O'Reilly, one of New York's finest, finds himself far away from Broadway in Lawrence G. Blochman's DANGEROUS WELCOME.

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¶ A still beautiful woman plans to dispose of a man in Veronica Parker Johns' NO TRACE.

and

¶ Ed "Square" Diehl has strange things happening to him in Leslie Charteris' new Saint story, THE FRUITFUL LAND.

—*in* THE SAINT DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

the madison murder

by . . . Kathleen Norris

She raised her fingers to her throat. Her eyes didn't leave him as he spoke. Suddenly she felt years younger. And happy.

"We have to keep it kind of warm in here because of their not getting any exercise—they get chilly," the matron explained.

"Don't they get out?"

"Not this weather. And they sort of lose interest. . . ."

The matron glanced at the visitor, and the latter, a big, quiet-eyed woman in a once handsome, dowdy coat, looked back at her dubiously.

"They haven't got much ambition left when they get *here*!" the matron said with a laugh.

The other frowned faintly, as if in vague pain. She followed in silence through the big clean impersonal halls that smelled of coffee, disinfectants, air heaters and herded, overclothed humanity.

"I didn't get your name?"

"And you're some kin to Lucas Rippey?"

"Some. . . . ? Oh no. Just a friend." Mrs. Huggett cleared her throat; her large, full, serious face had turned a little pale.

Some of the poor forlorn old men were reading shabby magazines in the winter heat of the

There is a bitter-sweet quality to this gently ironic story of two aging people who meet each other, years after it happened. While it is not a detective story in any sense of the word, we wanted you to read this story by Kathleen Norris, so justly called "America's Best Loved Writer."

Originally published as "Sinners" in Baker's Dozen, by Kathleen Norris. Copyright, 1938, by Kathleen Norris.

assembly room; a radio was playing. Many of the occupants of the big apartment were merely staring idly into space—broken in mind, the visitor saw, as well as body. The warm air was thicker here, with the smell of clothing and bodies and food.

Lucas Rippey was a thin, blue-eyed old man, with white, thin hair. He rose alertly, looked surprisedly at his visitor. When the matron had led them to a little side parlor and left them alone, he told Mrs. Huggett smilingly that he could not remember the time he had a caller before. His bright blue eyes twinkled at her delightedly.

"But I've only be'n here two years, ain't settled down yet!" he confessed. "I worked up to then. I got flu in the year 'twas so prevalent; the' warned me pneumonia 'd foller. And sure 'nough, it did!"

"Take a good look at me, Lucas," Mrs. Huggett said heavily. She had seated herself, thrown back her widow's veil. "Don't you remember me?"

He looked at her keenly, still smiling.

"No'm. I'm sorry. But your face don't say nothing to me."

"I was Emma Kent," she said slowly.

The old man sat down himself now, suddenly, with an air of shock, and returned her steady, unsmiling stare. The light had died out of his eyes.

"Is *that* who ye are. . . ." he said in a whisper.

There was a pause. Then the woman began:

"I've been hunting you for years."

"That so?" he asked, still in a dulled voice.

"Ever since I was thirteen years old," she resumed after another empty pause, "ever since I was thirteen years old—and that's all of forty years ago—I've been sorry."

A softer look came into the wintry, bright old blue eyes opposite her. Lucas Rippey began to shake his head regretfully, deprecatingly.

"I lied about you," the woman said flatly.

He cleared his throat and spoke without resentment.

"I've often wondered why ye did that," he admitted mildly.

"I don't know what got into me," the visitor said in a stony, quiet voice. "I don't know what does get into a girl, sometimes."

She paused, and he looked at her with respectful sympathy.

"I was running with Sue Clute. . . ." she began again.

"Well, there!" he said, his face suddenly brightening as he seized upon the diversion. "I hadn't thought of them Clutes for forty years!"

"Sue had her picture in the paper, an' that was gall and wormwood to me," Emma Huggett pursued, resolutely, unhap-

pily. "She was terrible pretty. I was just et up with jealousy, I guess."

He was considering it, his old head on one side, lips pursed and eyes narrowed.

"I never thought of that. I used to think you drémp' all you said," he murmured thoughtfully.

"No, I didn't dream it," the woman answered promptly. "I made it all up. I was dyin' to be important, to get noticed by somebody, like Sue had. The night Kane Madison was murdered I begun romancin' to my mother and gran-mother, an' the more they made of it, the smarter I thought I was. I don't know what in creation started me. But once I'd started, seems I couldn't stop."

"It's hard for us to explain our own acks, sometimes," Lucas said politely, in a pause.

"Hard?" she echoed in a tone that was itself hard. "Well, I've been trying to explain mine for forty years!" A shadow fell upon her plain good face. "You were in prison?" she asked reluctantly.

"Sixteen years."

"Oh, my God," Emma said in a lifeless whisper. "State's prison?" she added.

"State's prison."

"Was it awful, Lucas?"

"Yes, at first it was," he admitted, his eyes fixed on space as he remembered. "I wa'n't much more than a kid, and some of them men wasn't fit companions for man or beast. I was sickly too: I'd be'n raised in the Bayliss County Orphans' Home, you know."

"I didn't know that!" she said, stricken. After a moment she added, "One minute, the last thing I was thinkin' of was you. The next, I was tellin' Ma and Gran'ma this long rigamorole about how I seen you by the Madison place, runnin' and how you was buryin' something up near the birch grove in Holley's Woods. . . ."

"I never was anywhere near the Madison house that day," the old man offered as she paused. His blue eyes were fixed upon her with a sort of innocent, dispassionate expectancy. It was almost as if she were entertaining him with a story.

"You told 'em that in court," she nodded. For the first time anguish came into her voice. "Oh, why, why, why," she began, knotting her big, capable, work-worn hands together, "why didn't they believe you, instead of takin' the word of a crazy girl of thirteen! Mind you," she went on suddenly, "after that first crazy Easter afternoon, when I'd told my mother this yarn, I lay awake all night, and I made up my mind that I'd come out with the truth the next day, and tell them I'd been lying.

"But I couldn't get my courage

up for it at breakfast, and at school, in recess, I kinder began to let it out to the other girls that I knew something about Kane Madison's murder. It was just too easy.

"Walkin' home from school, I remember, the wickedness of what I was doin' suddenly come over me, and I spoke right out loud, while I was goin' by Bassetts Pond. 'This has got to stop!' I says, as loud as that.

"But then when I got home Judge Robbins was there—the old judge himself, that us kids were all so scared of. And he held out his hand to me, gentle and friendly, and he says 'Come here, Emma. You're only a little girl,' he says, 'and you don't understand the sinfulness of the world. Now,' he says, 'I want you should promise me that you'll not say any more about poor Kane Madison and the Rippey boy. Will you do that?' he says.

"Well, a great relief come over me, and I felt like I was saved. It never occurred to me that he was holdin' me as an important witness. I thought my share of the whole thing was over, and when the *Telegram* sent a feller out to get my picture the next day I was just as happy as I thought I'd be, not say nothin' more about anything, and yet I was gettin' all the excitement of bein' pointed out and talked about."

"You never seen me near the Madison house the day Kane was killed," old Rippey said definitely, after a pause, "becuz I wa'n't there."

"No, I never saw you at all that day," she agreed dully, the hard, shamed color in her face. "As a matter of fact I was up in our attic all afternoon, dressin' up and playin' lady."

"Huh!" he commented, thinking. The woman looked at him appealingly.

"I used to pray," she began suddenly. "I used to go down on my knees and pray that somebody would come out and prove that I was lyin'. But I couldn't do it myself!"

"I guess they'd have convicted me anyway," he suggested briefly.

"I don't know how they could."

"I was kind of a loafer," he remembered. "I was the kind of feller hard-workin' men like to git into jail."

Mrs. Huggett sat looking at him heavily, dumbly. She sighed.

"I started life a charge on the State," the man said. "I didn't git out of the orphanage until I was fourteen. At twenty-two I was back on the state agin for sixteen years. When I come out, I was quite delicate, and they sent me to Colorado. . . . Well, I worked some, there. But the state was payin' my rent, just the same. And now—here I am,

back on 'em for life this time, unless all signs fail!"

Her alert eyes had brightened with sudden resolute interest.

"This time," she said, "I can get you out if you want to get out."

"How do you mean?" he asked, puzzled.

"Well. . . ." She looked about the clean ugly, disinfectant-scented room, her shrug indicated the clean, ugly, disinfectant-scented institution behind it. "Do you like it here?" she asked simply, in surprise.

His old face flushed painfully.

"No, ma'am. Nobody could like it here," he answered firmly. "My pride—you may smile to hear me talk of pride—"

"I wasn't smilin'," Emma said, blinking and swallowing.

"The state's generosity I deeply appreciate," old Lucas Rippey said with his favorite forlorn attempt at literary flourish. "But I've by no means made up my mind to remain. I ain't sixty-four yet."

Emma Huggett was silent for a thoughtful moment, considering, with a faintly knitted brow and bitten underlip.

"I have a real nice ranch, down in the Santa Clara Valley," she began suddenly. "My husband got it from his folks. I have fruit and chickens . . . barns . . . everything."

"I guess that's down Linden Creek way?" he hazarded.

"That's in California," Mrs. Huggett said briefly.

He widened his amazed bright blue eyes; he was pleased.

"Well, for pity's sakes!" he confessed. " 'California.' It has a real pretty sound. I've always thought I should like to see California."

"I hope you will," the woman said ineloquently. There was a pause.

"Ain't it some considerable distance way?" Lucas Rippey asked respectfully.

"It's well over twelve hundred miles by rail," she said.

"You be'n visiting back here?" he pursued, puzzled.

"NO, I come to find you."

This left him speechless. He smiled his polite, appreciative smile.

"For forty years, I've been sayin' this to you," Emma Huggett presently began in a determined voice. "I don't know as I ever imagined I would find you in a state home, or that we'd both be so well along in years. But I knew that somewhere, sooner or later, I'd be saying it.

"You spent sixteen years in prison for a crime, you din't commit, and it was my fault," she summarized it. "I don't know, Lucas, that anything in the world can make it up to you," she added, and there was a wistful softening in her heavy face as she looked at him.

"I guess I didn't 'mount to

much, anyways," he said gallantly.

"That's neither here nor there; that don't lessen what I done," she persisted, tossing her head impatiently, as if she tossed his mollifying suggestion from her.

"Well, I always say I've had more time than most men for readin'," Lucas said cheerfully. "I'm a great hand for a book. Adventures—I seem to share 'em with the authors!"

"I'm well fixed," the woman said, not listening.

"And you live in California?"

"I was tellin' you. I've got a ranch—chickens and fruit—outside a place called Santa Clara."

He looked from the high institution window at barren fields level under January's snows. "You don't have no snow there?"

"My alfalfa was three inches up this New Year's Day."

"For pity's sakes."

"I had a big room fixed, off the kitchen, for my father," Mrs. Huggett presently observed. "He had sciatica, and he couldn't climb stairs. I have a radio down there, and a Victrola, and an airtight. He was real comfortable there. I've got an old car you could drive. . . .

"I'd do for you," she said humbly, thickly, her voice trembling, and her big bare hands beginning to tremble too. "I'd do for you just as I done for Father. There's lots you'd like to do about the place. There's a Portuguese girl helps me with dishes and cleaning, but I'm one to run my own kitchen, and I'd like to have someone to cook for again."

"I don't know as I understand what you're drive' at," Lucas said, clearing his throat.

"It isn't in any way making up to you," she persisted stubbornly.

"Why," he said kindly, pityingly, "what you done you done as a little girl. I wouldn't hold that against you! Nobody would. You seen a good chance to show off . . . children 'll do that. . . . That ain't nothing. . . ."

"I never thought, if I ever did find you, that you'd kill me, saying that," she observed as he paused. "I'll get you your ticket, I'll make all arrangements, and I'll meet you at San José station," she added.

Silence—a different sort of silence — deepened between them. The tears had come into her eyes, with the difficult words; tears stood in his bright old blue eyes as he answered her.

"Why, I don't hardly suppose you're asking me to leave the state home, Emma?" he faltered.

She made an awkward gesture, laughed thickly and briefly, frowned again.

"Well! You take me completely by surprise . . ." said Lucas.

"Well! This is surely unexpected."

"It's the one thing in this world that I want to do."

"Getting out, huh?" he mused. And there were already wings in his voice. He glanced out at the snow again; a radiator clanked in the warm, stuffy stillness. "I'd be glad to get out," he whispered, suddenly shaken. "This is a hard place to be . . . for a proud man." His voice thickened; he was still.

"I wouldn't be no burden to you!" he assured her, recovering.

"I wouldn't care if you were."

"Well, I wouldn't be. I could do a good deal of cartin', in that car—I can drive any make there is," he said eagerly.

"And there's nothing I don't know about chickens. Hosses—I haven't had so much dealing with them. But chickens—there's money in them. And I ain't a sick man, you know. I've always be'n a worker, only it was winter comin' on, and myself well along in years, and they being apprehensive that I'd take another chest cold."

"You won't get any colds in Santa Clara."

"California!" he said, rapt. "Well, I declare, I didn't know when I got up this morning—it shows how little trust we put in Providence—seems we never know what's coming."

She sat heavily silent, watching him anxiously.

"I take this very kindly of you, Emma," he presently said, considering.

"It's like a dream to me that I've found you, Lucas, and you aren't dead, and I can maybe make up the hundredth part of what I done to you!"

"We ain't responsible for what we do as children."

"No, but we can pay for it, Lucas. I've been paying for forty years."

"Sho!" he said, distressed.

"If they'd sent you to the chair, then I would have spoke!" she burst out miserably. "There wasn't ever any doubt in my mind about that! But there was extenuating circumstances, and you was only tried for manslaughter. And meanwhile, they were all making a fuss about me—reporters and court—everyone. I kept trying, after I saw how terrible a lie I'd told—I kept trying to cut it down, and they'd praise me for that too.

"My folks moved away, but I made a girl back home promise she'd let me know what happened to you. But she never wrote me. And after that I tried to put you out of my mind and to forget the whole thing.

"But I couldn't. It rode me day and night. It come between me and everything right and sweet about my marriage and my children. There wasn't one of 'em born but I didn't look down at his little face and say to my-

self, 'I wonder if some hysterical girl of thirteen is going to swear your good name and your future away!'

"You spent sixteen years in jail for a crime you didn't commit. But I've been forty years in hell, Lucas. I used to pray that the Lord would make it up to you and punish me. But I never had the courage to come out and confess. No living soul ever knew what you and I know. I was afraid."

"I don't know but what I've had the best of it, Emma. I haven't ever be'n much of a success," the man said. "But I don't know's I've ever be'n afraid, either. You mustn't feel too bad."

"I want you to come and live in comfort and independence on my place," she said. "If I'm ever to have another moment of peace, it'll be due to you. It's been burning in my soul for ten years that that was my way out."

"Well, you certainly are a good woman," he said slowly, in a silence.

"I'm not a good woman at all. I'm the murderer, not you. I hardly knew you, and I did to you what a savage wouldn't do to his worst enemy. There's no happiness I could give you that'd clear me, I know that. But if putterin' about the farm, and feelin' that you were a free man, with something put by in the bank, in case I was suddenly took. . . . If that'd mean anything to you, Lucas, late as it is now to make amends, why, it'd be a charity to me to let me do it!"

He blinked with wet, smiling eyes. But he spoke sturdily.

"If it'd mean anything! Why Emma, I don't know as folks realize just what this kind of a place is like, eatin' amongst a lot of paupers and beggars and fellers that aren't mentally straight. If I ask for a shirt or a sweater or a pair of pants, she unlocks the wardrobe and hands me out the first one she sees. I don't blame her, she's not got any reason to respec' me—but I haven't stopped respectin' myself, just the same. I don't know as you appreciate just how hard it is. . . ."

He stopped, smiling, with a circle of bright, hard red color in each of his withered cheeks.

"A man likes a little peace and privacy," he explained simply.

"I'm alone now," the woman said in a short pause during which they looked at each other. "My husband was a good man, but he was hard. He died awhile back; my boy died in the flu year. The other little feller died when he wasn't but four, and my girl married a missionary and lives in China. But I'm well fixed. I'm not complainin'.

"Only, there hasn't be'n a day of my life I haven't thought of

you. I don't know that there's be'n an hour when I haven't remembered that hot Easter Sunday, back home, when Kane Madison was murdered, and when I, a smug little girl of thirteen, with long curls, stood up and lied away your life."

"You wasn't nothin' but a kid, Emma."

"I knew better 'n that, though."

"I certainly," he said in a silence, "I certainly would enjoy livin' on a farm again. I'm country bred, and trees and fields seem to say something to me. Thoreau—a lady gave me a book by him. There was a man that had the secret of livin', Emma. Did you ever read his books?"

She was looking at him wistfully; there was something of humble entreaty, something of admiration, in her dull look.

"No, I never did, Lucas."

"Well, you'd enjoy 'em immensely," he said.

"There's just one thing more to say," she began abruptly, after a pause. "I want you to understand that the obligation in this matter isn't on your side. It seems to me you've already done more for me, Lucas, than I'm ever goin' to be able to do for you!"

Six weeks later she walked down to the barn, on a hot March morning, to tell him that lunch was ready. Supper was never anything but warmed-over biscuits and tea and fruit sauce and such nursery fare, but luncheon was a daily triumph for Emma, who was a master hand with chicken tapioca gravy and asparagus omelette.

The air was blue and singing this morning, and all about the white farmhouse the lilacs were in flower. The yard was pleasantly littered with ropes and planks and odds and ends; a bridal wreath had burst like a popcorn ball under the low window of Lucas' kitchen chamber, and up the slope of the hillside plum trees were white masses of bloom against a celestial sky.

The barn stood in a slight depression too shallow to be called a canyon; mighty oaks were scattered among the shabby old buildings; the windmill was flanked by towering, tasseled eucalyptus trees. A calf was blatting somewhere out of sight; chickens were talking and picking near the line of whitewashed farm buildings.

Lucas was sitting on a backless chair, mending something with a neat leather thong. The spring sunlight fell graciously upon his comfortable, relaxed old figure, in its muddy corduroys and thick sweater; he was whistling to himself as he worked, the Airedale attentive and adoring at his knee.

"If you aren't whitewashin' something, you're mendin' it!" Emma commented with an air of dryness.

"That Portygee broke his milkin' stool strap," Lucas explained.

"You're a great hand for jobs," she said, smiling in honest affection.

His delight in the little farm had made her see it with new eyes. Tom Huggett had been a sufficiently satisfied rancher, but there had been no romance in his attitude. Lucas, a broken old jailbird from the poorhouse, saw enchantment everywhere. One morning he was busily whitewashing, another hammering; on a third he drove the car into town and came back laden with chains, tools and seeds. The place seemed to gain an entity, a personal facination, under his eager care.

Since Tom's death she had tossed her weekly copy of *Farm and Orchard* unopened upon a heap on the desk in the unused dining room. Lucas had fed upon these hungrily, had drawn her into discussions of pruning and hen houses. He wanted to try a hive, one of these days; he had theories about acacia honey. He was already "Uncle Luke" to the Portuguese who worked intermittently on the place; to half the village; Carolina, the kitchen maid, adored him.

He was happy, and Emma Huggett, watching him wistfully, as he expanded in this new atmosphere of comfort and liberty, felt in her own sore heart a certain satisfaction that was somewhat like happiness too. The old car was a very Cinderella coach to him; he worked over it, tinkered with it, kept it shining. His own books and lamp, his coffee cup with the pink roses on it, the instant allegiance of the dog, these were things in which he took untiring delight.

"Lunchtime?" he said when she had inspected the one-legged milking stool.

"If you're going to be a real farmer, Lucas, you ought to call it dinner."

"Well, that's right too." He walked along beside her through opened gates and corrals. "This feels more like June than March!" he said. And then suddenly, "Say listen—listen. I've got a bone to pick with you! What's this all about?"

He drew from his pocket an envelope, a typewritten letter, a small neat brown book.

Her heavy sad face brightened only a shade.

"Oh yes!" she said. "Yesterday was the first. I put some money—fifty dollars—to your account."

"I don't need money!" he protested. "I've got some of that check you sent the superintendent. I haven't no more use for money here than Captain has."

The dog leaped at the kindly old hand that dropped to his silky head.

"I'd pay a foreman more 'n that Lucas."

"Why, but sho!" he said. "I eat my weight in butter and eggs every day. . . ."

"You don't eat much," she said quietly in the pause.

"It'll just accumulate there at the bank," he said stubbornly.

"It's a good place for it."

"I want to tell you something that may make you feel good, Emma," the man said suddenly. "I've kinder wanted to say it for some time; I may's well say it now. I'd live the life I've lived all over again, to have it come out like it has now."

"There isn't any money in the bank that could buy your sayin' that," she said simply after a pause.

"We don't know what governs our destinies," he went on. "What I'd have be'n without them long years of incarceration, who can say? I was destined to endure 'em, and you destined to eat your heart out with regret. But we don't know but will all's for the best. . . ." He stopped, innocently pleased with his own oratory.

She sighed deeply, frowned.

"You've got a sweeter nature than I have, Lucas."

"It don't take a very sweet nature to appreciate having health and liberty and some work to do," he suggested.

"Remorse is the thing that ages you and eats into your night's rest," the woman presently observed in her own heavy, hopeless way. "You might well forgive and forget, because you are innocent. But I keep going over and over it. Ma and Gran'ma were in the kitchen when I got home that Easter afternoon, and I'll never forget Ma's holding out the paper to me. 'See about Susan Clute, and her folks sendin' her East for violin lessons?' she says. Sue'd always had everything I wanted.

"It kinda made me sick, the rest of that afternoon. I changed my dress and bathed my face and took a good long drink of water out at the pump, I remember, but I was just shaking inside.

"About six o'clock Mrs. Tenney came running over, and she told Ma about Kane Madison being murdered. 'I'd like to know where Lucas Rippey was this afternoon,' she says in a scared sort of whisper, 'because everyone knows he and Kane were both after Thelma Cass.'

"Then I spoke up. Right out of a clear sky I says, 'Why I saw Lucas Rippey up near the Madison place this afternoon!' I says. The minute I said it I knew I was done for. They both turned to me.

" 'Then you know where poor Kane was found?' Mrs. Tenney says.

" 'It must have been somewhere near the house,' I says at

random, not knowing whether she'd know I was lying then and there and say that the body was down near the railroad tracks or something. But no, she just looked scareder than ever, and she says, 'Yes. He was lying right across the doorsill.'

"After that I went on. As different neighbors came in I'd tell it all fresh. And when Judge Robbins come, the next day, I was as easy as an old shoe with the details about how you spoke to me, and how you were buryin' something and asked me not to say I'd seen you. . . .

"I was crazy, that's the only explanation."

They had halted in the shadow of the barn at the dooryard fence. The lilac blossoms near them moved in a soft breath of wind and were still. The spring sun shone down warmly upon the white-painted house and the new green of the high elms and maples. Larks went singing up from the grass in the green fields.

"I thought we was goin' to forget all this, Emma."

She laughed a brief, troubled laugh with a note of shame and gratitude in it.

"Yes, that's the sensible thing to do."

"I don't know as it matters much what you do with your life, long's you end it right," Lucas said thoughtfully.

"I know. But as if there wasn't trouble enough in the world, to send an innocent man to prison! Lucas," she added abruptly, in a quickened voice, "Who did kill Kane Madison?"

"I don't know. We had a fight at the livery stable, all right, him and me," the old man said, "like it was proved in court. We fought over Thelma—she'd gotten into trouble, and he was sorter laughin' at me about it. I don't know when I've got so mad—all of a sudden.

"But that wa'nt all the score betwixt Kane Madison and me. Ever since I'd be'n a little feller in grade school he'd been bullyin' me. He used to twist my wrists. Sometimes my wrists would be sore for weeks, but I never dast to tell anybody. I hated him, all right; I would have killed him fast enough!

"This afternoon he come into Lenhart's stable while I was tendin' it for Len Lenhart, and he begun to ask me if I would like a message from Thelma. I wasn't never a regular beau of Thelma's but she seemed awful sweet and pretty to me, and I couldn't think of her bein' in trouble.

"He backed me up to the loft ladder, and he begun forcin' me up, and I struck at him with the broom handle—like they brought out in court—and I yelled at him that I'd kill him, all right. The lady in the cottage next door told all that true

enough, and that I run out after him. . . .

"But then who did kill him, Lucas?"

"Mysteries of the missin'!" he said cheerfully. "I always thought Millie done it, for all her carryin' on an' her widow's veil. It's a plot, all right!" He admitted himself that he was "great" on mystery stories. But then, Emma would muse a little enviously, he was "great" on everything. She was well past her half-century mark, but she had never met anyone like Lucas before, unless an occasional vital enthusiastic child were like him.

Everything delighted him, every waking, every breakfast, every hour of his busy puttering day was a separate delight. He discussed the chickens as if they had been human entities; the old plow horses came over the corral fence and rested their great shaggy heads there when Lucas was busy in the farmyard; the Airedale crushed his hairy length against Lucas' porch door at night and whined and muttered from time to time in a very ecstasy of love.

Miss Farmer ran out of the library with a new detective story for "Uncle Luke." Doc Brainerd, the veterinary, came out to the ranch and conferred with him. Thin little overworked Mrs. Pointer from the next farm told Emma that the children were different creatures since Uncle Luke had begun to give 'em lifts in his car, and the very minister himself, ending a call, said warmly, "You've got the secret, Mr. Rippey. I'm a young man, sir, I've got a lot to learn. You do me good."

It was only upon the famishing Emma that the healing dews did not fall.

"I see you as a little feller in the orphanage, Lucas, Missin' your mother, probably, wonderin' if you was ever gon' to have folks and a home of your own. And I see you gettin' out, a skinny little feller of fourteen, workin' for Smiley, the undertaker. What'd that old skinflint pay ye, anyway?"

"Fourteen a month."

"Good grief! Whatever did you pay at Mrs. Mason's for your room, then?"

"I paid her a dollar sixty a week. Her boy Silvester was in the same room."

"And you got your meals?"

"Picked 'em up where I could. I used to go over to the station restaurant lots, and help 'em wash dishes."

"Silvester Mason wa'n't any too good company for you."

"No, he was a real demoralizin' influence, I always figured."

She would regard the sunshiny old thoughtful face wistfully, painfully.

"Nothin' hasn't ever embittered you Lucas."

"No," he would agree, considering. "Don't know's it has."

"But wa'n't you thunderstruck when I, the minister's niece, came out with all that rigamarole?"

"Yes, I was, as I recall it. I was real surprised."

"It was my evidence that done it, Lucas."

"Emma, can't you forgive and forget?"

And Emma would laugh in desperation, seeing the sympathetic look upon his kindly, rosy old face.

"I tell you there's many a millionaire of sixty-five that'd want to change places with me!" he assured her over and over again.

One very hot July noon he and she were alone, in burning summer silence, on the shabby, shadowy side porch. The night would bring coolness, indeed, would bring actual chilliness again, but it was hard, at the moment, to believe in anything but dry, parching, relentless heat.

The sky was whitish blue, the fig tree shadows seemed to pulsate with a green light. In the orderly dooryard pepper plumes hung motionless, filling the air with pungent scent; long strips of cream and russet bark fringed the towering trunks of the eucalyptus. Chickens were fluffing and complaining in the shadow of the stable lane; the windmill wheel was lifeless. Now and then the dog sighed, moaned faintly in his sleep.

Walled on three sides by the house and comfortably fenced on the open north side by heavy grapevines, the side porch was the coolest place on the ranch. It was mellowed by half a century of plain, busy living; its floor sloped a little, its unpainted woodwork was satiny from the touch of fingers. A shabby screen door connected it with the kitchen; a shabby single step with the packed hard earth of the yard.

Emma, always restlessly active, was stringing beans with quick, expert movements of knife and fingers. Her big hard hand would fill with the finished green strips, she would open her fingers to release them into a saucepan beside her. Her thick black hair was brushed back, crisp and wet; her full throat rose from a thin old cotton gown she called her "voyle."

Lucas was tinkering patiently with a yellow-jacket trap, bending the wire gauze carefully, whistling under his breath. He was in his shirt sleeves; sweat stood on his childlike old forehead, his thin silvery hair was plastered down with it.

He glanced at his companion now and then; stopped whistling.

"Heat's givin' yo kinder a headache, has it, Emma?"

She raised heavy eyes.

"No, I don't know as my head aches," she said slowly.

He worked on again in silence, and again gave her an uneasy look.

"Emma," he said suddenly. "There's something I want to say to you."

She glanced up expectantly; his tone was odd. Her hands were still.

"I've had this on my mind for some time," Lucas began again. His old face had reddened painfully. He hesitated, looking at her doubtfully. "This may make kind of a difference," he said and stopped.

"Whatever on earth are you talkin' about, Lucas?"

"You've be'n very kind to me," the old man resumed, forcing himself on. "And it's only right you should know."

"Know *what?*" she asked, nervous and impatient.

"Emma," he said, "would it surprise ye to know that I done it?"

She looked at him blankly, not in the least understanding.

"I mean—that you was right about Kane Madison," Lucas said.

The burning, difficult color of middle age spread to her own face now. Her eyes not leaving his, she automatically put aside her panful of beans and raised her fingers to press her throat.

"Yes sir, I done it," Lucas then stated flatly, in an expressionless voice.

"You . . ." she stammered, and swallowed with a dry throat. "You—why, Lucas Rippey," she added sharply, regaining her senses, "you don't know what you're sayin'!"

"Yes, I do, Emma," he persisted simply.

For a long moment she watched him steadily, almost fearfully, her breath coming quick and shallow.

"You wasn't anywheres near the Madison place!" Emma whispered at last.

"Becuz Kane Madison wa'n't killed at his own place. He was killed at Lenhart's barn, and he run all the way home."

Her eyes flashed as she considered this.

" 'Twa'n't even possible," she breathed, still watching him as if fascinated.

"That's just the way it was, though, Emma."

"Oh, my God, my God, my God," she murmured, looking away. Her hand was clutching her heart now. Her lids had half sunk over glazed eyes, her breast moved painfully.

"I hit him with a pipe in Lenhart's," Lucas resumed. "He backed me up the ladder; he was ta'ntin' me about Thelma. I useter go kinder crazy even before I left the orphanage. The matron knew it, 'Don't get Lucas into a tantrum,' she useter say."

"Lucas, you never killed Kane Madison!"

"I say I did."

"You hit him on the head—"

"Down at Lenhart's, that Sunday afternoon. He run out the side door and went streakin' up through the medder. I run after him a piece, yellin' at him that he couldn't talk to me that way, that I'd kill him. Then I come back and I was scared. I knelt down and prayed right there in the middle of the stable, that he wouldn't die."

"But the mallet, Lucas? The mallet they found in the Madison kitchen, that had blood on it?"

"Well, maybe it was ackshally used to hammer a steak with, like old Gran'ma Madison said. Anyway, I knew I'd hurt him considerable. There was blood on the pipe, all right. I got up from my knees scared to death, and I says, out loud, 'I've got to get out of here! I've got to get away.' I says. And then it sort of come to me that no, better hang around and act innocent. So I went out and washed the gas pipe at the troft and threw it down in the sun on the dry grass."

"Your sleeves was wet when they come took you!" she whispered, struck.

"Yes, from washin' the pipe. I washed my hands good, too, and then I prayed some more. My mother had be'n a great believer, and I says, 'I'll believe, too, if You get me out of this!"

"Well, I've come to believe!" he ended, with his wintry, sunny old smile. "But I had a long way to go before I found God."

"Lucas," the woman said, and her own voice was like a prayer. "Do you tell me you killed Kane Madison?"

"Emma, if it meant goin' back to the town farm, I'd have to tell ye—"

"Oh, let that go!" she exclaimed, suffocating. "Just tell me—tell me that you done it—"

"I do tell you I done it!"

"You killed him, only he got home before he fell?"

"He run across the medder, Emma, holdin' onto his head."

"They never thought of that!" she said, thinking aloud, remembering.

"They never thought of that."

"Then my lie," she began, trembling, ending a short silence, "my lie wa'n't all a lie, Lucas?"

"No. I got—he cleared his throat—"I got what was comin' to me!" he admitted.

"Oh, no," she muttered, shaking her head, covering her face with her hands and swaying to and fro, "No, it wasn't right. It wasn't right to give a little feller of twenty-two a life term, no matter what he done! And you from the orphanage, too, and delicate—like we all knew you were.

"But, oh—my—God, Lucas,"

she gasped, looking up. "I'm so grateful to you for havin' told me! I'm so *grateful* to you! I'm grateful to God!"

Her hands were over her face again.

"My God, I thank Thee!" he heard her say. "I thank Thee!"

When she sat down in her chair, arms dangling limply at her sides, eyes fixed on the hot white sky beyond the grapevines she was panting, and he saw that her cheeks were wet.

"Don't mind me, Lucas," she said in an infinitely exhausted and gentle voice, with an unsteady smile. "Them's tears of joy. I'm happy. I don't know as I've been so happy since that Easter Day."

"It's been on my mind to tell ye."

"And I thank you, Lucas. You never did a kinder thing in your life."

"I wanted ye to know."

"Mind you," she said with a sudden vigor, "it don't lessen my wickedness in lyin' about ye! No, it don't do away with that. But at least I didn't send an innocent boy to sixteen years in hell and ruin his life."

"You must of knew, Emma."

"No, I didn't, Lucas. I told them lies out of whole cloth!"

A long silence, hot and still all over the burning world that was beginning to smell of dusty apples and Isabella grapes.

Emma was breathing like a spent runner, sweat stood on her temples.

"The relief of it, Lucas!"

"It's goin' to make you feel different to me, Emma, that's what I'm kinder afraid of."

She had closed her eyes, her head flung back. Now she opened them. A smile—it was to him a new type of smile—on that sad, heavy face, suddenly brightened it. She did not speak, but she extended a brown, hard hand, and his fingers caught hers.

"You don't feel—hard, toward me, Emma?"

"Hard?" she echoed with trembling lips. "Lucas," she said, "I'm never goin' to feel hard again toward nobody."

"I'm a criminal," he reminded her simply.

"Yes, but you paid, Whilst I . . ." she was beginning. "But no. I've paid too," she amended it under her breath. "God knows I've paid too! We both done wrong, Lucas. But through the infinite goodness of God we've found each other and forgiven each other, and that's all there is to it. You've done more for me this afternoon than I could do for you if I made you the King of England."

Blinking, swallowing, her hands still shaking, she began to gather up her pans.

"Well, there, I haven't felt like this in dear knows when," she said laughing and crying at

once. "I'm goin' in to wash my face and hands and brush my hair and get my bearin's. It seems to me like a new world, and I shouldn't wonder if 'twas a pretty good one, like you're always tellin' me."

The screen door banged behind her lightly; he heard the clink of the pans in the kitchen, and then her heavy step mounting the inside stairs.

Lucas sat on, on the shady side porch, tinkering with his trap, smelling the pleasant summer smells of dry tarweed and yarrow, wet, sprinkled roadside dust and ripening grapes. He began to whistle softly again as he worked. Once he spoke to the drowsing dog who immediately rose, whimpered affectionately and pawed at the brown corduroy knee.

The old man smiled. He looked away, through a pattern of grape leaves, at the eternal hills, transparent and delicate today as opal-colored gauze. They seemed as light, as floating as the cloudless sky itself.

There was peace, there was content, there might even have been a trace of wise and subtle humor in his eyes.

FINAL GAMBLE

A famous gambler had just died. The funeral was well attended by his professional friends who listened, their heads bowed, as the reverend intoned, "Our beloved friend is not dead. He only sleeps."

Way back in the rear came a soft whisper, "I've got a hundred that says he don't wake up."

THE SAINT always took a somewhat less than Saintly interest in a good crook, as Ed Diehl was to find out one otherwise beautiful day, in

THE FRUITFUL LAND

a new Saint story by LESLIE CHARTERIS

—*in the next* SAINT

THE saint's RATINGS

Little Bits of Paper—

Little blobs of ink can make a mighty fine story or... This month, authors and publishers have been kinder than they sometimes are and we have been able to more or less leave the pitchfork in the hayloft—where it belongs.

OUR RATING SYSTEM:

- Three haloes: Outstanding
- Two haloes: Above average
- One halo: Passable reading
- A pitchfork: For the ashcan

IT'S MY FUNERAL, by Peter Rabe (Gold Medal, 25¢)

Daniel Port could become boring were it not for Mr. Rabe's dexterity and ability as a writer. To those who are meeting Dan Port for the first time, "It's My Funeral" should prove entertaining and convincing.

THE HOUSE OF NUMBERS, by Jack Finney (Dell, 25¢)

Top suspense by a writer who obviously knows his subject and believes fiction should be written more convincingly than truth with, we are sure, the ability to wield his pen either way.

A SHADY PLACE TO DIE, by John Savage (Dell, 25¢)

Well written story about a mining camp in the desert and a killing that could not be avoided. Believable people and a logical ending make the difference between an almost ran and the ticket that pays off.

SO YOUNG, SO WICKED, by Jonathan Craig (Gold Medal, 25¢)

So awful.

MURDER OF A MISTRESS, by Henry Kuttner (Perma Books, 35¢)

Psychoanalyst Michael Gray, back once again in a new story, seems to have acquired a lot more poise and knowledge since the first time we met him. Good plot, tense and entertaining.

AGREEMENT TO KILL, by Peter Rabe (Gold Medal, 25¢)

Long-winded, mostly boring with only a flash here and there of what we usually expect from Mr. Rabe. Plot and characters, mostly unconvincing, topped off by a fairy tale ending. Just saved from the pitchfork by good writing.

THE HOODS TAKE OVER, by Ovid Demaris (Gold Medal, 25¢)

Blood, sweat and tears may be convincing in some heroes, but in this case we wish the writer had furnished the bandaids, handkerchiefs and shower for the reader.

if the duke should die

by...E. Phillips Oppenheim

Certainly not! He should regard any further move on their part as an impertinence. His voice was cool.

VAN DEYL, naked as the day he was born, stood in the center of the Eden Roc dressing room —six foot two of symmetric young manhood—and looked around him with a discontented frown.

"Say, what's happened to this place, anyway?" he demanded. "The first thing I hear when I arrive is that Ned Loyd—one of the best—good old Ned!—has been drowned aquaplaning, then there has been a murder and a great robbery up at the Chateau, and now I can't find my panties. Something sinister in all this."

The valet, who had been assisting in the search, appeared with a very abbreviated pair of knickerbockers, which Van Deyl accepted and buckled on with a grunt of thanks. A friend turned round from the washbasin.

"It does seem as though there was something queer about the place this season, George," he remarked, rubbing his tousled hair vigorously with a towel. "There was a murder too up at St. Paul, at that jolly little restaurant, one night. Beastly affair. Still, there's plenty of fun going.

The Riviera of E. Phillips Oppenheim was a golden land, peopled by charming intrigantes, adventurers and empire builders, men and women who rewrote history there in the sunshine of the South of France. He is best remembered for THE MILAN GRILLROOM *and* PETER RUFF AND THE DOUBLE FOUR.

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I'm not sure that the pace isn't even hotter than last year. My little crowd got in at seven o'clock this morning."

"Call that a holiday," his friend grunted.

"You'll be doing the same yourself in a day or two," was the cheery comment. "There's something about sitting up late here which seems part of the life. Lighter drinks perhaps."

George Van Deyl stretched himself, left the room, crossed the passage and made his way through the crowded bar towards the diving boards. Halfway to his destination he came face to face with Ralph Joslin, peignoir-clad and dry from a sunbath. The former paused irresolutely.

"Hello, Joslin!" he greeted him.

"Hello, George!" the other replied.

There was a moment's awkwardness, as sometimes happens when men engaged in the secret business of the world come face to face in a public place.

"Your first visit, isn't it?" Joslin enquired.

Van Deyl nodded.

"I'm a Biarritz man," he confided. "Uncertain weather, but glorious sea when you can get into it."

Joslin glanced around. No one appeared to be taking any notice of them.

"Still at the old shop?" he asked.

Van Deyl was mildly surprised.

"I should say not," he replied. "I quit two years after the war. Shouldn't have stayed that long except that there were one or two matters I wanted to clear up. I'm in Wall Street now and in the soup with all the rest of them."

"Bad luck!" Joslin commiserated, showing signs of moving on.

"I'd like to have a few minutes with you after I've had a swim," Van Deyl remarked.

"I shall be about," Joslin answered, without any particular enthusiasm.

Van Deyl strolled thoughtfully out into the sunshine, shielded his eyes for a moment with his hand, then descended the stone steps and walked to the end of one of the springboards. He hesitated for a moment, stretched himself, and then made an unostentatious dive.

His last thought as he fell through space into the salt water was of the man he had just left.

Caroline Loyd, very elegant in her green pajamas, tightly fitting green cap and cape, waved to Joslin as he climbed the stairs and looked around the Eden Roc restaurant. He crossed the floor at once to the table where Caroline was awaiting him.

"Hope I have not kept you

waiting," he apologized. "I saw Van Deyl downstairs."

"George Van Deyl?" Caroline asked.

"The same."

There was a moment's silence, followed by a discussion about lunch.

"I am afraid," Joslin went on, as soon as they had given their order, "that our habit of occasionally interfering in other people's business has developed in me the vice of curiosity."

"It is a very amiable failing," Caroline sighed. "It gives one so many interests in life."

There was a brief pause. The *maitre d'hotel* had stopped in passing to offer his respectful greetings. The wine man had appeared for his customary order. Both men presently faded away.

"Is it George Van Deyl who has stimulated your curiosity?" Caroline enquired. "You were in X.D.O. with him, weren't you?"

"For one year only, during the war," Joslin confided. "I went back as soon as I was fit again into active service. Van Deyl couldn't. Some of us thought he was going to be an invalid for life about that time, but he pulled himself together somehow or other. Says he is in Wall Street now."

Caroline smiled.

"You appear to be rather incredulous."

"I am," he admitted. "I happen to know that he is second in command today at X.D.O. and the best man they have got for foreign missions. If you will believe me—he is staying here with the most abominable little specimen of a man you ever saw."

"That sounds queer," Caroline commented. "George Van Deyl always used to be very particular about his company."

"Well, you wouldn't be seen in the same party with this fellow," Joslin declared. "He is a slimy-looking, bumptious little bounder of the worst possible type. But—he is a multi-millionaire," Joslin added. "I cannot help thinking that George is not here with him for nothing. They have something on. I am going to hang around after lunch and see if there is anything to be picked up. Where can I find you later in the day?"

"In my sitting room at seven o'clock," Caroline replied. "I always try to get an hour's rest before I change. Don't get to work too soon unless it is urgent. I have a date for dinner."

"That's the worst of a woman," Joslin grumbled. "Always pleasure before business."

Caroline laughed.

"Show me the business," she challenged.

For one of the finest chateaux in the Alpes-Maritimes, the room in which George Van Deyl

and Mr. Reuben C. Essenheim were invited to attend the pleasure of the man whom they had come to visit, certainly lacked any suggestions of hospitality. It was approached by a long corridor leading from the very magnificent hall, and was a plain square apartment with stone walls and a stone floor, in the exact center of which reposed one priceless rug. The walls were undecorated, of furniture there was none except six highbacked but supremely uncomfortable Provençal chairs of the best period, which stood primly on one side of the room, and a further six opposite. Between them was a round table. The windows were small and high and protected by bars.

The room, but for the choiceness of its scanty furniture might well have been the waiting room of a prison or some public institution.

"Say, that young man would need to get a push on if he were secretary to an American," Mr. Essenheim remarked, glancing at his watch. "Another ten minutes in this morgue of a room and the salt tears will stand in my eyes. Do you reckon he knows that I am Essenheim, Chairman of the Grand Prudential Trust?"

Van Deyl yawned.

"I don't suppose he's ever heard of the Grand Prudential Trust," he replied.

His companion gazed at him, open-mouthed.

"Say, young fellow, are you trying to put one over on me?" he demanded. "This Prince, whom we've come to visit, is a millionaire, isn't he?"

"He's a very rich man," Van Deyl acknowledged.

"Then you're not going to tell me that he's not heard of the Grand Prudential Trust," Essenheim scoffed. "Where there's money the folks know about the Grand Prudential Trust."

"Maybe," was the curt comment. "Here comes the secretary anyway."

There were footsteps in the long passage outside, then the door was quietly opened. The young man who had taken their message reappeared. He was tall and good-looking in a studious sort of way. His manners were exceedingly good. It was ominous that he held in his hand the card which Mr. Essenheim had pressed upon him. He laid it unostentatiously upon the table.

"I am very sorry, gentlemen," he announced. "His Highness declines to break his rule. He has no longer any interest in outside affairs. They are all arranged for him."

"Do you mean to say that he refuses to see me?" Mr. Essenheim exclaimed angrily. "You showed him my card? He understands who I am and whom I represent?"

"I daresay he does not understand that," the secretary admitted, "because he has no interest at all in financial matters. On the other hand, he wished me to say to you, Mr. Van Deyl, that he is anxious to show every courtesy to a representative of your Government, but he scarcely sees in what way he can be of service to you."

"Naturally he can't understand that before I have had an opportunity of explaining," the young man declared eagerly. "If he will see us for five minutes I shall deliver to him personally a message from an official in Washington with whom he has some acquaintance, and I feel sure he will then understand our intrusion."

"Very well, Mr. Van Deyl," the secretary acquiesced. "If you will undertake not to be with him more than five minutes, I am to conduct you to him."

He turned towards the door. Essenheim followed the two men.

"I beg your pardon," the secretary observed, turning round, "I fear I did not make myself quite clear. The Prince will only see Mr. Van Deyl, out of compliment to his official position. No one else."

"Do you mean to say that I am to sit here and wait?" Mr. Essenheim spluttered.

"You can walk in the garden, if you please," the young man pointed out. "I can assure you that it will not be a matter of more than a few minutes."

Mr. Essenheim, who probably had never been so angry in his life, was speechless. They left him there, however, crossed once more that magnificent hall, and passed into a very beautiful apartment upon the ground floor. Van Deyl, although he had scant opportunity to look around, had the impression of having found his way into a palace. His companion ushered him towards the spacious writing table at which a tall, gray-haired man was seated. In front of the latter were three or four photographs of pre-Rafaelite pictures, some books of reference and a small priceless Old Master, which scarcely needed the magic scrawl of Fra Filippo Lippi in the corner. A little to the left, through the open window, was a stretch of beautiful country, a gleam of blue sea, between the trees the Esterels—dim violet monsters traced against the distant sky.

"Your Highness," his secretary said quietly, "this is Mr. Van Deyl—the young American gentleman who wishes to see you."

The Prince who had been writing laboriously on a large sheet of foolscap, turned round, the black ebony pen with its gold clasps still in his hand. He had a short, pointed gray beard as well as a mass of gray hair,

and his eyes were the eyes of a dreamer.

"Mr. Van Deyl," he said, with stiff courtesy, "you announce yourself as an official representative of a certain branch of the United States administration; otherwise, as is well known, I do not receive callers. What does the American Government require from me?"

Van Deyl was somewhat taken back. He met the question frankly however.

"The American Government is not directly concerned in my mission," he acknowledged, "but Mr. Essenheim, my companion, has a scheme for the purchase of an almost defunct railway which operates close to the frontier of a foreign country. For certain reasons it has been decided at Washington that it would be a great advantage to us to have that railway line re-established. Officially we can do nothing, but we are prepared to support, to a certain extent, any private enterprise. Part of our support is my presence here and this explanation which I am asked to give you officially."

"And my interest in the matter?" the Prince enquired.

"You are the registered holder of a large number of the shares," Van Deyl exclaimed. "Why you bought them, or how they came into your possession, no one knows, but they are registered in your name, and dividends—in the days when there were any—have been received by you. Mr. Essenheim cannot complete any scheme for the reorganization of the railway without acquiring control, and whoever desires control must possess your shares. He is, therefore, over here with a proposition to you to buy them."

"Then, the sooner Mr. Essenheim—or whatever his euphonious name may be—gets back to where he came from," the Prince replied, "the better. In these days my life is dedicated to one object. I have a man of affairs who sees after such matters as those to which you have alluded."

"Let us, if you please," Van Deyl begged, "get into touch with him. We have no wish to trouble you personally. Let us put the matter before him and he can then ask for your instructions. Money is doubtless not of much object to you," the young man added, "but you will certainly be a great deal better off if you listen to what Mr. Essenheim has to say."

"The only thing in the world of which I have too much," the Prince replied coldly, "is money. I should refuse to listen to any scheme increasing my income."

Van Deyl was staggered. It was very hard indeed to adopt ordinary business methods and modes of persuasion with any one holding such views.

"Your shares are absolutely

valueless," he pointed out desperately, "under present conditions. They are not quoted on the Stock Exchange, they are producing no dividends, they will never be of any value unless the railway is reorganized. Mr. Essenheim is the man to do that and this is the moment."

"My chief inspiration concerning this particular moment," the Prince said gently, "is that it is an opportune one for you to take your leave. Your request is refused. Please do not trouble me again in the matter."

He swung round in his chair. Already his eyes were searching for the place in the manuscript where he had broken off.

"Will you at least tell me the name of your man of affairs?" Van Deyl implored.

"Certainly not," was the cool refusal. "I should regard any further move on your part in this matter as an impertinence. Charles," he added, turning to his secretary, "show this gentleman and his friend out."

Van Deyl made his way back to where Essenheim was waiting and Mr. Reuben C. Essenheim had a great deal to say. Nevertheless, it was perfectly ineffectual. The secretary, though his manners remained pleasant, with a couple of servants in the background, was an omnipotent force. The two ambassadors were politely, but ignominiously, shown off the premises. As they stepped into their car on the other side of the great iron gates, Mr. Essenheim was still talking furiously. A young man who was making some adjustments to his motor bicycle, which was leaning against the wall, watched them with curious eyes as they left.

The next stage in the proceedings connected with the inauspicious mission of George Van Deyl and Mr. R. C. Essenheim was marked by the following letter from an eminent firm of American lawyers established in Paris. It was addressed to the ancient house of Lafardiere and Fils of Nice, and ran as follows:

Dear Sirs:

We understand that you act as agents in the affairs of the Duc de Sousponnier, resident at the Chateau de Sousponnier, and sometimes known as Prince Maurice of St. Saens. We are the European representatives of the Grand Prudential Trust, the President of which—Mr. R. C. Essenheim—is in this country at the present moment. Acting upon his instructions, we are venturing to approach you with regard to our client's desire to acquire a block of shares, namely, 4390, in the Great Eastern Railway Company of Texas.

We should like to say, for your information, that the railway is at present inoperative. The shares of the par value of $100 are unquoted,

and no dividend of any sort has been paid for the last seven years. These facts can easily be confirmed. Furthermore, a recent bankers' estimate of the value of the shares under present conditions was $12½, and we venture to think that at that price there would be few likely purchasers. Our client, however, who has been exceedingly successful in various reorganizations, has outlined a scheme to rebuild and re-establish the railway under entirely fresh auspices. To do so it is necessary for him to own control of the shares. He is a very large holder already, and has bought several considerable blocks at from $12½ to $15 a share. He wishes to acquire the holding of your client, the Duc de Sousponnier, and for that purpose he will be glad to know at what price the Duc would be prepared to sell his holdings for cash. We are not asking you, of course, to accept our word for the facts which we have stated, but we should be glad if you would make the necessary enquiries through your bankers and communicate with us as speedily as possible, as our client is anxious to return to the States.

Faithfully yours,
Bland & Henshaw.

The reply to this letter was received within a few days.

Dear Sirs:

We have received your communication respecting your client's suggested purchase of the shares in the Great Eastern Company of Texas, held by our client the Duc de Sousponnier. We regret, however, to inform you that His Highness is not disposed to make any offer of the shares in question.

Faithfully yours,
Lafardiere & Fils.

On receipt of this letter Van Deyl had hard work to keep his friend Mr. R. C. Essenheim from precipitating himself into the sea. For twenty-four hours he shook with fury. At the end of that time he was himself again, and in due course another letter from Messrs. Bland and Henshaw reached the firm of Lafardiere and Fils.

Dear Sirs (It said.)

We are in receipt of your letter of the 17th, and regret very much that your client will not state the price at which he is prepared to sell his holding in the Great Eastern Railway Company of Texas. The acquisition of his shares is frankly necessary before the reconstruction of the company can be attempted. We cannot believe that your client would deliberately block the development of a great industrial enterprise, and we trust that you will take an opportunity of explaining the matter fully to him. If the company continues moribund, the shares which you hold on your client's behalf will decline in value until they simply become

wastepaper. Not only your client, but many other stockholders throughout the country will suffer. We are instructed to offer you in cash, payable at the Credit Lyonnais within twenty-four hours of your agreement to sell, the sum of $50 a share for your 4390 shares, amounting to $219,500, or at today's rate of exchange Frs. 5,487,500. We may add that this offer is one which can never be repeated, and which is at least five times in excess of the present value of the shares.

Faithfully yours,
Bland & Henshaw.

The reply to this was prompt and brief.

Dear Sirs:

In reply to your offer for our client the Duc de Sousponnier's holding in the Great Eastern Railway company of Texas, our client wishes us to state positively that he does not intend to sell such holding at any price, and he desires no further communication upon the subject.

Faithfully yours,
Lafardiere & Fils.

Mr. R. C. Essenheim was a man who had never known a day's illness in his life, but on receipt of the translation of this letter he took to his bed for two days and refused to speak to anyone. Van Deyl, passing his time rather warily down at the bathing club and in the Casino, came face to face with Joslin one morning.

"What's become of your little pet?" the latter asked.

Van Deyl indulged in a grimace.

"Sulking," he announced. "He's been so used to having his own way ever since he became prosperous, that he can't understand life over here, or the mental outlook of people who do not think along the same lines. For the first time in his career, I think, he is beaten, and it's going hard with him."

"The worst of these little men who don't drink," Joslin observed, "is that they have no other way of getting rid of their gall, so they go to bed and very often turn sick."

"I'm the fellow who ought to be sick," Van Deyl remarked gloomily. "I have given up my holiday to this job, I've had to cart the little bounder around for two months with just my expenses paid, and I was to have got fifty thousand dollars if the thing had come off."

"Tough luck!" Joslin murmured sympathetically. "When are you back to New York?"

"Very soon, I expect. Unless I stay on here, as I think I shall, and take a short holiday. I know exactly what will happen to my charming companion. In another day, or perhaps two, he will get up in the morning with either

some new scheme in his mind, all cut and dried, in which probably I sha'n't be interested, or with his passage booked and reservations made for home."

"Can't think how you come to be mixed up with him," Joslin observed.

Van Deyl shrugged his shoulders.

"He was wished on me by the Department," he confided. "Costain himself was very keen upon his success over here, and I fancy he thought I might be helpful. But I've not been a damn' bit of good to anybody."

"Come and have a swim," Joslin suggested. "A bite of luncheon afterwards, if you like."

"I'm with you," the other acquiesced.

When at last Van Deyl left the raft and swam lazily towards shore with pleasant thoughts of a cocktail and lunch in front of him, he saw a familiar little figure waiting at the top of the steps — a small commonplace looking man dressed in expensive clothes, utterly out of touch with his surroundings—an object of curiosity to everyone. Van Deyl abandoned the brief sunbath he had proposed for himself and hurried on.

"Glad to see you are better, sir," he remarked. "Had a good rest?"

Mr. Essenheim's thin lips curled in a peculiar smile.

"I do not rest," he said. "Since the time I saw you last I have had forty-seven cables, twenty or thirty local telegrams, the visit of a police Commissaire, a private detective and one of our own Wilberforce men. I have now made my plans."

Van Deyl stared at him, speechless.

"You take my breath away, sir," he said at last.

"You are not of the type which understands rapid action," Mr. R. C. Essenheim declared. "I have no complaint to make of you. You did what you were expected to do. It failed. It was not your fault. Here," he announced, drawing an envelope from his pocket, "you will find dollar bills for all that I owe you, and what I consider a fair amount over for expenses."

Van Deyl held the envelope in his salt wet fingers.

"And you," he asked curiously, "what are you going to do? Return to America?"

Mr. Essenheim gravely removed his horn-rimmed spectacles.

He blinked for a moment and looked up at his questioner in blank surprise.

"Go back to America?" he repeated. "Without the Great Eastern shares?" Do you imagine that I made my millions, young man, by giving up things?"

"You have a nerve, sir," Van Deyl acknowledged. "If you get

those shares, I'll take off my hat every time I hear your name."

Essenheim smiled queerly. He was watching the approach of a motor boat rounding the point.

"There are more roads than one to success," he said. "Au revoir, Mr. Van Deyl. I am going with my friend Commodore Jasen to lunch at his chateau. I see he has come for me."

The little man in his business suit, so out of place in such an environment, descended the stone steps with pompous bearing—an object of amazement to everyone. He stepped into a dinghy and was rowed out to the motor boat which was hovering round. . . .

Joslin strolled up to Van Deyl and the two men stood together, the sun blazing down unheeded upon their bare heads and the seashine of their bodies.

"So the great Mr. Essenheim is a friend of Commodore Jasen's," Joslin said curiously.

"First I knew of it," Van Deyl replied.

Mr. Reuben C. Essenheim selected the most sheltered spot in the motor boat and established himself in it with considerable care.

"I am obliged to you, Commodore," he said, "for your invitation to lunch, but I only eat once a day and I drink nothing whatever. I have had three biscuits and a glass of Perrier with a teaspoonful of brandy in it. That will last me until evening. I wish to speak to you alone. Here we are alone. What could be better? We talk for ten minutes, afterwards you go back to your chateau and send me back to my hotel."

"Just as you wish," the Commodore replied, a little shattered. "I can make you a cocktail here if you like."

"I never touch them," Mr. Essenheim protested. "Now, Commodore, I came over to Europe for one reason and with one intent. I wish to purchase, preferably at my price, otherwise at his, four thousand three hundred and ninety shares in an American Railway from a man who calls himself the Duke of Sousponnier. He is so greedy about titles that occasionally he is known as the Prince of St. Saens."

"I know him," the Commodore admitted. "I should never have looked upon him as a likely owner of American Railway stock."

"He holds those shares," Mr. Essenheim went on, "and he declines to part with them. He declines even to see me. I have approached him at his chateau. Our lawyers have approached him with what must seem to be a ridiculous offer. We have offered him fifty dollars share for share that on the market would not fetch twelve dollars.

He simply refuses to do business."

"A most unreasonable man," the Commodore murmured. "A man in constant ill-health, though. Before long you will probably find those shares upon the market. If his is a French Will, as I daresay you know, every foreign share must be sold."

"Quite so," Mr. Essenheim agreed. "But the question is—how long will he live? To me the question presents itself—how long should a man of such obstinacy be allowed to live?"

Into Commodore Jasen's blue eyes there suddenly flashed a light of apprehension. For many hours he had been wondering what this millionaire financier could be wanting with him.

"I am not a man," Essenheim continued, "who accepts failure. I have agents everywhere—friends in other worlds who have sometimes been useful to me. I am in touch even with the private detective forces and Police Headquarters in my own country. The wires have been buzzing round the Hotel du Cap d'Antibes while I have been lying in my room. One of the first things I learnt, Commodore, was that a portion, at any rate, of the famous Lebworthy Gang was supposed to be hovering around these parts."

Still the Commodore made no remark. He tapped a cigarette upon the hard seat and lit it.

"The Duke of Sousponnier," Mr. R. C. Essenheim went on, "has offended me mortally. He refused to receive me. He left me in a waiting room, I have never found, in the course of my life, that it pays to allow men who offended you to continue unchallenged. He is a sick man, they tell me. Very well—earlier or later, what does it matter? There is a third point—he stands in the way of a great enterprise. With antediluvian pig-headedness he blocks progress. A man like that should go."

"You spoke of the Lebworthy Gang," Commodore Jasen ruminated. "Have you any real reason to imagine that any of that desperate crowd are in this locality?"

"Not the slightest," was the emphatic response. "If they were here, I should never know it, but I have taken out a mental policy upon the life of the Duke of Sousponnier, and it would be worth a hundred thousand dollars to the beneficiary."

"One hundred and fifty thousand dollars, I think," Commodore Jasen murmured.

His companion sighed.

"Say, isn't that rather a tall order?" he asked.

"Not at all," the Commodore assured him. "First of all, it would be exceedingly difficult to get into touch with any of these desperate fellows and secondly,

well—we are not in Chicago, are we?"

Mr. R. C. Essenheim took out a checkbook from his pocket and very carefully he made out a draft to self for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars and endorsed it. He dated it a week ahead.

"In a week," he observed, as he tore it out and passed it to his companion, "I shall stop payment of this in Paris, but if by any chance I should be owing that amount to the beneficiary of that life insurance—well, the check could be cashed at any time at the Paris branch of the Grand Prudential."

Commodore Jasen thrust it carefully into his waistcoat pocket. His guest pointed to the shore.

"If you can land me," he said, "I should be glad. I have decided to move to Nice and I have ordered my car for two o'clock. Bad news travels fast enough through the press, Commodore. I shall not leave you my address."

Van Deyl was a cheerful and welcome addition to Caroline's luncheon table at the Cap. He made no secret of his admiration for Caroline and talked over old times with Joslin.

"Tell me, what has become of your strange little friend?" Caroline enquired.

Van Deyl smiled.

"He really isn't a bad sort. I was sent over from Washington to help, if I could, in a scheme of his. I have not been able to make good and he has given me the sack. Never mind, he did it very graciously."

Both Caroline and Joslin were interested.

"Is he going home?" the former asked. "Has he really given up his enterprise here, whatever it may have been?"

"He didn't tell me anything about his plans," Van Deyl admitted. "He simply wished me to understand that I had had my chance and failed and that he was going to carry on alone. With that he left me. He embarked on that wonderful fast motor boat with the nautical-looking gentleman with the white mustache, who plays around here sometimes."

There was a moment's silence. Caroline shot one swift glance across at Joslin and then looked out to sea.

"Commodore Jasen," the latter murmured.

"Yes, that is his name," Van Deyl observed carelessly. "Nice-looking old duffer, but I don't see quite what use he is going to be to my little friend."

Caroline was her old bewitching self as she leaned across the table, her chin resting upon her clasped hands.

"It is your own fault, Mr. Van Deyl," she said, "if you have

made us curious. Of course, one knows what you have done during the war, and your Washington work, and everything to do with Secret Service is so fascinating, but when you come to connect with a man like Essenheim—well, it does seem inexplicable, doesn't it?"

"Money," Van Deyl remarked thoughtfully, "is perhaps rather an uninspiring power, but in our country, at any rate, it is a mighty one. Essenheim is worth, I should think, forty millions. For that he is, in his own circle, a kind of emperor. He commands his friends. I am not sure whether he does not command the law. I don't know," the young man reflected, "that there is any particular secret about our mission here — certainly not about my part in it. Essenheim has a great scheme for reorganizing a defunct railway. What's at the bottom of that is the only secret in the matter, and that I can't tell you. For certain reasons the Government approves warmly of his scheme and would very much like it carried out. That's why I came over to help him."

"And you have failed?" Caroline asked sympathetically.

"We came across a man unlike any I have ever met before," Van Deyl admitted frankly. "He holds four thousand three hundred and ninety shares of the Great Eastern of Texas which we want, which are certainly not worth more than ten dollars a share, if that, and yielding him no dividends. He refused to sell them today at fifty dollars."

"Who on earth is this imbecile?" Caroline asked, trying to keep the intense curiosity from her tone.

Van Deyl hesitated. After all, was there any secret about the matter? He imagined not.

"A man calling himself the Duke de Sousponnier," he confided, "also the Prince de St. Saens. He is already enormously wealthy and he declines to either buy or sell a share of any sort. He is writing a book and appears to think of nothing else."

Caroline leaned back in her place. The excitement of the last few minutes had been a strain on her nerves. She began now to see daylight.

"What a lucky man you are, Mr. Van Deyl," she murmured, "to be mixed up with such interesting affairs."

He made a grimace.

"Well, I've had to pay for it," he reminded her. "Essenheim isn't every one's choice of a day-by-day companion."

"What do you suppose," she asked indifferently, Mr. Essenheim's new scheme is?"

Van Deyl shook his head.

"I can't imagine," he said. "The Duke is supposed to be in very bad health, so I advised Essenheim to shelve the whole thing. If the Duke were to die,

the shares would come on the market automatically. On the other hand, I don't think he has taken my advice. He would not have entered into all this correspondence and cabling without some object."

"It seems rather a queer anti-climax, doesn't it?" Caroline mused, gazing out seawards, "that after all these exhaustive efforts, he should spend the morning going out to lunch with a harmless old gentleman like Commodore Jasen?"

"If I were still interested," Van Deyl remarked, as he rose with the others regretfully to his feet, "I should want to know something more about Commodore Jasen."

Caroline, that afternoon, picked her way through a mass of debris and avoided with difficulty being entangled with a crowd of workpeople, who were dealing with the reconstruction of the Chateau de St. Veran. She found the Marquis, or Armand, as she now occasionally called him, talking to an architect and his foreman. He abandoned them precipitately, however, and hastened towards her.

"You are so welcome, dear Mees Caroline," he said as he bent over her hand. "For the renovations you come early. There is much to be done before we can even commence."

"But you," she asked—"you are feeling some interest?"

He smiled his assent. He was well and carefully dressed in country clothes and he seemed once more a young man.

"It has come, that interest," he admitted. "You have awakened it. I wish now, more in the world, to make my home once more like the Chateau of my fathers. Tell me, there is something I can do for you perhaps, or you permit that we go in search of Madame, and insist upon some English tea?"

She laughed at his somewhat anxious glance of enquiry.

"Of course you guess that I have come here for something. You are quite right. Tell me, who is the Duc de Sousponnier who lives at the marvelous chateau on the other side of the valley?"

"Who is he?" the Marquis repeated.

"Well, my uncle for one thing, a great scholar for another, a very rich man for a third."

"Do you ever see him?"

"Every week. He is passionately absorbed in a book he is writing—on the Renaissance, I think—but, nevertheless, he always received any one of the family. I go to pay my respects generally on Friday evenings. I always leave feeling that he has remembered me quite wonderfully in his testament, but up till lately I have wished, oh, so

much, that he would hand out a few hundred francs on account!"

She laughed.

"Well, you are past all that now."

"Thanks to you," he murmured.

"Today is Friday," she reminded him.

He nodded.

"I shall probably go and see him this evening."

"Will you do something for me?" she begged.

"Why, of course, I will. But do you mean with my uncle?"

"Naturally," she replied. "You know how fond I am of meddling in other people's affairs!"

"Your interference in mine was the most fortunate thing that ever happened," he rejoined.

"Well, then, have confidence in me," she said. "I want to buy four thousand three hundred and ninety shares which your uncle holds in an American Railway."

"Dear me!" the Marquis murmured. "Are they very good shares?"

"I don't know," she admitted. "I can only tell you this—that if he were to get a report upon them today he would be told that they were worth about twelve dollars. I would like to give him twenty dollars. If you wish, I will divide any profit I make with you *cinquante—cinquante!*"

"Feefty-feefty," he exclaimed with delight. "Are you serious, Miss Caroline? My uncle is an impossible man with strangers but to us of his family he is something amenable."

"Buy me those shares, Armand," she wheedled, "and I will come up and help you every other day with your decorations."

"I shall buy them," the Marquis declared. "I shall approach my uncle with talk, but if necessary I shall use force. I will buy them. Have no fear. You will have to find a good deal of money."

"I have a good deal of money," she assured him.

The Marquis glanced at his watch.

"Wait for me a short time here," he begged, "and you shall accompany me. Alas, I cannot promise that my uncle will receive you, I must leave you in the car. But you will have early news of my effort, and—Mees Caroline—"

"Well?"

"If I could go feefty-feefty with you—"

"In this matter of the shares?"

"No. In yourself."

The architect blundered in, but that wistful look in her eyes, the faint pressure of her fingers, was something.

An hour later the Marquis came down the broad paved way from the entrance to the

Chateau de Sousponnier and passed through the wide-flung gates. Caroline had been leaning back in the corner of the limousine, but she stepped lightly out at his gesture.

"My uncle," he announced, "would be glad to have the honor of receiving you. He is not in one of his best moods, I fear, but he is at last gracious."

"I shall come now?" she asked.

"At once."

They went into the Chateau, escorted by bowing servants, passed without entering the dreary waiting room, which had so much fretted Essenheim, and into the very beautiful library where the Duke worked. He had left his seat at the desk and was in an easy-chair, from which he rose at once at their entrance. There was a smell of spring flowers about the place, of violets, carnations and early roses, which haunted her for long afterwards.

The Duke himself looked old and ill.

"This is the young lady, Uncle," the Marquis announced. "You permit, Mees Caroline, that I present my uncle, the Duc de Sousponnier—Mees Caroline Loyd."

The Duke raised her fingers to his lips.

"You are the young lady whom, indirectly, my nephew has to thank for the restoration of his family fortunes," he remarked.

"Very indirectly, I am afraid," she replied. "Still, it has been a great pleasure to me. It was wonderful coming across that old document."

"I myself had heard of it," the Duke admitted. "We should have searched. But there—we are not a business family. We are rather by way of being fools, Miss Loyd, except sometimes a little knowledge of art, perhaps, in the old days some skill of soldiering. By-the-by, what is this my nephew tells me? You are so much of this modern world—that you, a young lady of your age, you wish to buy some shares?"

She smiled.

"I do indeed," she told him. "I want to buy them for your sake, too, as well as mine," she went on. "I think that so long as you hold them, your life will be in danger."

The Duke looked at her curiously. This was a strange thing to hear.

"My life!" he exclaimed. "How is danger to my life connected with my holding these shares?"

"Perhaps I should not have gone so far as that," she explained. "The only thing is, you see, that there are some people who are desperately anxious to have them, who would pay almost any price, and if you refuse to sell

—well, nothing but your death would bring them into the market."

"I see," he remarked. "You believe, then, that some one might attempt my life?"

"I should not be surprised," she assured him.

He touched a bell.

"Charles," he asked his secretary, who hastened in from the anteroom, "what shares were they that those strange people tried to buy?"

"Four thousand three hundred and ninety Great Eastern Railway of Texas," the young man replied. "They were bought at fifty. They are now valued at anything between five and fifteen. The company appears to be moribund."

"We have the documents themselves?" the Duke asked. "What is it you call them—share certificates?"

"We have them in our own vault."

"Make up a parcel of them and present them to this young lady," the Duke enjoined, a little wearily. "That will save my being bothered about them any more."

"But we have not yet agreed about the price," Caroline protested, a flash of triumph in her eyes.

"The price?" the Duke repeated. "I do not sell any of my belongings, even my shares, Mademoiselle. They are yours with great pleasure. Keep them, or do what you like with them, as a slight memento of the services you were able to render to my nephew. Are other documents necessary, Charles?"

"The transfer, which I will draw up, is all, Your Highness," the secretary replied. "They happen to be bearer bonds of an old-fashioned type."

The Duke glanced over at his writing table.

"I shall see you on Sunday as usual, Armand," he said to his nephew. "Mademoiselle, your visit has been a great pleasure."

He bent over her hand. Before Caroline quite realized what had happened, she was in a small room with the secretary, who was drawing up some papers and making out a sale sheet of the bonds. He hurried out for a moment to obtain the Duke's signature. When he returned, he handed her the packet.

"But it's impossible," Caroline declared. "I must give an undertaking to pay a certain price for them."

The young man shook his head.

"It would not be wise to insist," he said. "The Duke would be angry and very likely take them back again. Money means nothing to him and he hates all form of barter. You need not hesitate, Mademoiselle," he added. "If it were necessary at any time to realize the Duke's be-

longings, he would be one of the richest men in France."

"Will you do this for me?" she begged, as they walked across the courtyard together towards the automobile. "I know that there are some very desperate people in this country, who are so anxious to obtain possession of these shares, or to see them upon the market, that they might go to any lengths. Watch the Duke closely tonight and tomorrow night."

The young man smiled.

"That sounds almost melodramatic," he observed.

"Never mind what it sounds like. Do it, please," she implored.

"The young lady is of a sagacity most astounding," the Marquis declared. "When she speaks of a thing she has knowledge."

Charles inclined his head.

"Every precaution shall be taken," he promised, bowing them into the automobile. . . .

"Well, what do you think of my uncle?" the Marquis asked, as they drove away.

"You are both utterly and entirely ridiculous," she told him, smiling. "You have lost touch with the world. You are survivals, but you are adorable."

The Marquis leaned towards her. Caroline had laid her hand gently upon his and he was very happy.

Commodore Jasen was the soul of courtesy, as he rose to receive his visitor. He moved a chair for her close to his own upon the terrace and he knocked out the ashes from the pipe which he had been smoking. Nevertheless, in his placid blue eyes there was a sudden steely light. Commodore Jasen was on his guard.

"My friend," Caroline began, "few words are best. Besides, there is need for haste. Mr. R. C. Essenheim, I have no doubt in the most indirect way possible, has yet placed a certain proposition before you within the last few days."

"Mr. Essenheim?" Commodore Jasen repeated thoughtfully. "The little man who lunched with me?"

"Cut it out," Caroline enjoined sternly, with a touch of the manner which she had outlived. "You know I'm not squeamish. I would not interfere in any of your schemes to save a man's life or his money, but you don't want to run risks for nothing, do you? Mr. Essenheim wants the shares in the Great Eastern Railway Company of Texas brought upon the market. Well, they are on the market already. They don't belong to the Duc de Sousponnier any longer; therefore, if by any chance a high-class burglary, with accessories, were perpetrated tonight or any other night at the Chateau de Sousponnier, it would be sim-

ply a washout. The shares have been transferred to my name and they are in the safety vault of the Bank in Juan-Les-Pins where I have an account."

The Commodore was impressed.

There were many things for which he hated Caroline, and there were a few for which he loved her, but he knew very well that there was no one in the world less likely to tell a falsehood.

"Now, Commodore," she went on, "you have not had the best of luck out here. You are always complaining of me. I tell you I am sick of the ordinary sort of adventure and I am thinking of backing out. I shall hate you all my life for what you did to Ned, and yet I know that what you did, you did according to the code. Therefore, I forget it. Stop anything you may have started against the Duke, and I will let you in upon this deal, fifty-fifty."

Commodore Jasen's slowly breaking smile was the pleasant gesture of a great and benevolent man.

"You are yourself again, Caroline," he declared. "Later in the day we will make our plans. It will take me a good many hours to stop what has been started."

"I must know before eight o'clock that it has been stopped," she insisted, "or I will fill the Chateau de Sousponnier with police."

"If I fail to stop it," the Commodore promised her earnestly, "I will be there myself to prevent trouble."

Then there were many hours of strenuous search. The purlieus of Nice and Beausoleil were carefully combed. Furious efforts were made to pick up the trail which had been purposely dropped. It was not until after ten o'clock that success was assured. A fast motor boat came smoothly into the harbor at Nice and three well-dressed but dangerous-looking young men stepped into a waiting car and were driven to a small hotel close at hand. They entered the dimly lit lounge to be confronted by a small group of men who had the appearance of commercial travelers. There was a moment of uncertainly, the glitter of dull electric light on dull metal, as the foremost of the three newcomers took note of various unexpected things. The sound of a familiar voice, however, changed all that. Bottles of wine were brought in and emptied. A raid upon the dancing cabarets of Nice was planned. It was disappointing, but all the same, a night of gaiety was well enough in its way. The Chateau de Sousponnier and its occupants remained undisturbed.

Mr. Reuben C. Essenheim left

for New York three weeks later with the missing shares in his dispatch box, and his great money-making scheme for the reorganization of the Great Eastern Railway of Texas already launched. Nevertheless, he had met with new experiences and he was far from happy. He had met a man who had refused to do business with him, a woman who was as hard as himself in a deal, and he had been forced to leave behind a million good American dollars, when he had expected to spend fifty thousand. The fact that the little colony at the Chateau d'Antibes was lighter-hearted and happier for his brief visit failed entirely to alleviate his gloom, nor would it have afforded him the slightest satisfaction if he had known that the "feefty-feefty" negotiations between Caroline Loyd and the Marquis had advanced a step further on his account.

Caroline and Armand de St. Veran lay side by side upon the rocks at the Cap d'Antibes. The shine of the sea was upon their bodies and the exhilaration and joy of it in their hearts. The Marquis was sometimes a little shy when he found himself alone with this sweet but masterful young woman. Today he found courage.

"Miss Caroline," he said, "you have now so much money, and soon, when the winter comes, I shall have a home which I dare offer even to you if you do not want any more adventures —no?"

She laid her hand upon his. Such small endearments were quite in order at Eden Roc.

"Dear Armand," she said, "I am almost sure. Will you wait until the summer is past?"

He turned round a little and his eyes watched the sunshine in her hair.

"When I look at you," he murmured, "a day seems too long, but when the summer is over, the Chateau will be finished, so I will wait."

something white

by . . . Herbert Brean

How long can a man starve before he will betray his country? The conquerors thought they knew, until that night.

IN THAT latitude, at that time of year, twilight falls swiftly. The captain, working over a weekly report in the small, prim parlor that had been the mayor's before the occupation, saw only shiny blackness when he looked up toward the window.

His orderly knocked, entered on being bidden, and closed the door carefully. "Sir, it is the informer, Char. He has been dealing with Lieutenant Nubba, but says it is important."

The captain looked through the orderly and said, "I will ring."

When he was alone, he went to a filing cabinet and drew out a thin dossier. It told him that before the occupation Char had been a minor official of the town, a bachelor and unpopular. Twice before he had come with information about the small Resistance group. Most of it had already been known to Nubba, yet Nubba had noted Char down as a man worth cultivating, and had paid him, once with food and once with cash.

Returning to his desk, the cap-

Life *editor Herbert Brean, who covered the recent trial of Dr. Addams, turns to murder again (he is the author of several novels including the recent* MATTER OF FACT [*Morrow*]) *in this vignette of the interplay of fear and avarice—and vengeance. This could have happened in 1941, in 1951, in—*

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tain lit a cigarette. There was no doubt in his mind that he should see Char, but he did not like dealing with these people, nor with any except his own kind. He was an ordnance officer whom the exigencies of the occupation had tossed into commanding this small, cold town with its small, cold population.

An inhuman people, these—insane! They repeatedly risked being shot to chalk a word, "Freedom," on buildings, to shout it from a window, even to mutter it in the presence of his troops. And they did not even understand what it meant! They did not appreciate that "freedom" really means freedom to work for the state, to follow joyously and unflinchingly the orders of the man above you, to give all you are and have to advance the cause.

But even so, he thought, they might at least appreciate an opportunity to become part of a bigger and stronger country. Instead, they had fought their benefactors, openly at first, and, now that their government had fallen, treacherously and viciously.

The captain crushed out his cigarette, straightened his tunic, and touched a buzzer.

Char, the informer, paused inside the door. He was a slight, bony man with a big skull and watery eyes. The gap between his trousers and shoes revealed bare ankles. "Before, I talked to the Sir Lieutenant," he began.

"I know. Sit down. Cigarette?"

Char took a cigarette eagerly and sat down nervously. "I have come," he began, "because the Sir Lieutenant has been most kind. My children are in great need . . ."

The captain, who knew he lied about having children, also realized Char was starving, and it pleased him. "If you have anything of value, you will be paid," he said.

"I—it is about the officers, Sir Captain."

The captain made a mask of his face. "What about the officers?"

Char looked down, as though forced to speak of something indelicate. "You have lost many."

"Well?" The mask was imperturbable.

But it wasn't easy. He had come here eighteen days before with five officers and a detachment of forty men. In the past week four of the officers had left headquarters on missions or inspection trips and had not returned. Morale was dangerously low in the barracks: the men went out on patrol with set faces and scared eyes, with nothing of the conquerors' pride. Only his own and Nubba's discipline held them together.

"I have learned what has hap-

pened to the officers," said Char. "All five of them."

"Four!" snapped the captain.

"Five," said Char very softly.

The captain's mask tore like chiffon. "Nubba—Nubba left last night for—"

"He did not get out of town," said Char.

"What happened to my officers?"

"A trick, Sir Captain, a clever trick. It involves a flag. I can show you."

"Good! What is the trick?"

Char coughed into both hands, and shuddered. "First there is the matter of pay."

"We'll speak of that," the captain said, "when you have told me."

Char clearly wanted to argue and did not dare. "It is not a matter of telling, but of showing," he said. "It is a symbol. The Freedom Flag, my foolish countrymen call it. Only a few minutes from here. The Captain can disguise himself like a villager."

The captain snorted. "I will take twenty men," he said. "You will lead us."

"If you take any men," said Char, "their movements will be known throughout the village before they have marched six paces."

As was his habit, the captain considered. He wanted to deal these stubborn villagers a blow; and what it would do for the men's morale if, singlehanded, he destroyed the Resistance's most telling weapon!

When duty presented itself, the captain was not one to flinch. He ordered civilian outer garments and, at Char's suggestion, a pair of night glasses. He drew a long automatic from his holster, inspected its magazine, and looked significantly at Char.

When they had slipped out the back door, he kept Char in front of him, and his hand, thrust through a slit in the cape, on the pistol's thick grip. They walked quietly along a dark, lifeless street.

Char turned into an alleyway. "Through here," he whispered. A dozen paces, and they turned again into a narrow passageway between two buildings. The captain paused to listen and assure himself that no one was following them. At the mouth of the passageway. Char looked out on another street.

"There, Sir Captain." He flattened himself against the wall so the captain could stand beside him. "You see? On the dark house, across the way?"

The captain strained his eyes. "I see nothing. What is it?"

"The Freedom Flag, they call it. A clever device. Use your glasses, Sir Captain."

The captain braced himself to hold the glasses steady. Presently he glimpsed a white flutter near the door of the house.

"Yes, I see it. What is it?" He was impatient.

"A flag, Sir Captain. The Resisters whisper strange things about it so that your officers hear them. That is how they got your men to the house."

"But that's no flag," said the captain. "It's only a rag. It symbolizes nothing."

"That," said Char, "is the mistake all your people have made. It symbolizes everything."

And plunging his knife into the broad back presented to him, he twisted it hard.

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a credit to the force

by . . . David C. Cooke

Loretti felt himself lucky until that encounter with grimly determined Lt. O'Brien and little Sergeant Goldberg.

LIEUTENANT of Detectives Timothy O'Brien couldn't have been happier if his buxom wife Mary had just presented him with triplets, all of them girls. Lucky Lou Loretti, his primary and seemingly invulnerable target for many years, had just entered the airline terminal building and was walking rapidly toward the flight check-in desk. If O'Brien had been a gambling man he'd have been willing to make book that this time, at last, he would be able to put an end to Loretti's nefarious career.

He turned to Sergeant Sol Goldberg, whom he'd borrowed from his normal duties to help on just this one assignment, and said, "Here he comes now. Make it good, fellow; no rough stuff, no nervous fingers."

"You don't have to tell me, Lieutenant," Goldberg said. "I've been on the force long enough to know my business."

Then, together, they stepped forward. O'Brien tapped Loretti on the shoulder and said, "Going somewhere in a hurry, Lucky?"

The big man turned, his face bland at first and then twisting

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David C. Cooke's 12th edition of his BEST DETECTIVE STORIES OF THE YEAR *(Dutton) has just been published. Cooke, who is Aviation Editor for North American Newspaper Alliance, and author of 15 books on aviation, is now working on his 35th book — a novel set in Colorado in 1869.*

into a picture of distaste. "What do you want, O'Brien?" he demanded. "I've got no time to talk now; I'm late and the plane is already loading."

The detective shook his head and smiled. "It'll have to take off without you, Lucky. Your wings are being permanently clipped as of now." He looked briefly at Goldberg. "Frisk him, Sergeant."

Goldberg was a small, almost dapper man. He appeared strangely incongruous standing next to the imposing Lucky Loretti and running his delicate fingers over him. After a moment he stepped back, his face inscrutable.

"Clean as a whistle," he said. "Nothing to worry about, Lieutenant. Not a single thing."

"All right," Loretti demanded gruffly, "suppose you tell me what this is all about. You've got a devil of a nerve stopping a man just as he's about to board a plane. I've got important business in Chicago that can't wait."

O'Brien smiled indulgently. "It can wait, Lucky; it's going to have to wait a long, long time. We've got a nice little cubbyhole reserved for you in the coop."

"You're a colossal fool," the racketeer growled. "I'll be on my plane tomorrow morning and you know it."

"I don't think you will," O'Brien told him. "Maybe you've slipped through the Department's fingers before, but this time your luck has run out. I'm arresting you," he added quietly, "for the murder of Al Varady."

A grin spread slowly over the big man's face. "You're a bigger fool than I thought," he said confidently. "And this time I'll ruin you. I'm going to sue both you and the city for false arrest. I've taken all the abuse I intend to take."

"So have the police and the honest citizens of this city," the detective said evenly. "Come on, let's go. You can tell us all about it when we get to Headquarters."

Everybody knew that Lucky Lou Loretti was the kingpin of the worst rackets in the state, but proving it was a different matter. He was a very shrewd operator, with a mind as brilliant as a trial lawyer's. According to the records, he was Chairman of the Board of a firm with the innocuous name of Investments, Inc. The main purpose of this organization was ostensibly to finance small businesses, with little or no collateral necessary.

Once, long ago, when Loretti had been picked up for questioning, he sat completely at ease in a chair and flipped his Roman lucky piece over and over. The ancient coin was his talisman, and his habit of constantly toying with it had won him his so-far appropriate nickname. He insisted that it was no fault of

his if the people to whom he had made loans used the money for unlawful purposes. He had their applications on file proving that he knew nothing about the nature of these operations. He was an honest, God-fearing citizen who paid his taxes and trusted the integrity of the people coming to him for financial assistance. The police had been forced to let him go for lack of evidence, although they knew he'd been lying through his teeth.

Timothy O'Brien had himself led several raids against horse parlors and gambling halls and far less savory businesses which were suspected of being under Loretti's direct control. He had questioned scores of girls and dealers and bookies and had waded through dozens of filing cabinets in hopes of finding some shred of evidence, no matter how small, to connect Lucky Lou with the rackets. But each time O'Brien had been forced to admit defeat. Loretti remained the untouchable one, the model citizen they could not drag into court for anything even as trivial as a parking violation.

And then, just a few hours ago, a call had come in from the excited desk clerk at the Shelbourne Arms. A man had been shot in one of the rooms, he'd said. A man named Varady. Varady had been Loretti's right-hand man.

The victim was still alive when the police arrived, a revolver on the floor next to him. He lived long enough to gasp that Lucky Lou had shot him.

But the statement of a dying man was not enough, especially when the weapon proved to be his own gun. O'Brien and his squad combed the hotel for fingerprints, they questioned guests and the elevator operator and the bellboy and the clerk. None of them had seen Loretti or anyone who looked like him. Or so they said.

It seemed that the racketeer had once again escaped. And then O'Brien hit upon a plan he thought would work.

Now, seated across the table from Loretti in Headquarters, the detective said, "Killing Varady was a bad mistake, Lucky. What was he trying to do, take over?"

"You're talking like a jackass," the big man said, acting the indignant citizen. "I didn't even know he was dead until I tried to get him on the phone and the hotel told me."

O'Brien knew it would be a waste of time to check the phone call. Loretti was a methodical man. If he said a phone call had been made, it had been made.

"Are you trying to tell me you weren't in the Shelbourne Arms at all today?" O'Brien asked.

"That's exactly what I'm saying. But don't take my word for

it—not that you would anyway. Check with the desk clerk and the bellhop at the hotel."

"I've already questioned them," O'Brien admitted. "You were the Invisible Man to everybody except Al Varady. But he saw you point a gun at him and pull the trigger."

Loretti smiled. "Do you call that evidence? I'm not naive, O'Brien. Everybody in this town knows you've been trying to railroad me for years. Do you think a jury would believe hearsay evidence when I can prove my whereabouts at the very time Varady was shot?"

Loretti sat back and relaxed, smug and self-satisfied. He put a hand idly into his coat pocket, and a strange expression crossed his face. A moment later he felt in his other pocket.

"Looking for something?" O'Brien asked.

"Just my cigarettes. I must have left them in the taxi on the way to the airport."

"Sure you weren't looking for something else?" O'Brien reached into his pocket. "Like this, maybe?" He slid an old and worn metal disc across the table.

The racketeer's face froze in surprise and a look of unspeakable horror came into his eyes. "Where'd you get my lucky piece?" he gasped.

"Do I have to tell you?" the detective said. "Maybe you were in there after all."

The big man was shocked numb, his aplomb completely gone. A spiderweb of perspiration oozed out on his forehead and his hand was shaking as he daubed at his face.

"Well, Lucky, I'm waiting."

"It was self defense," he said, his voice strained and unnatural. "Varady pulled a gun on me—I got it away from him." His eyes became pleading. "That's the truth. I swear it is!"

O'Brien got up slowly from his chair. He walked over to the door, pulled it open. "The prisoner's ready to talk, Krasa," he called to the clerk.

Later, after Loretti had been taken away, O'Brien sat flipping the ancient Roman coin, a smile of sweet triumph on his face.

"Strange, isn't it?" he said. "About Lucky being so superstitious, I mean. I could have told him that the only kind of luck this old coin had was bad. Look what happened to the guys that used to own it—they're all dead." He looked up at Sol Goldberg, who was groaning at his poor joke.

"You're a whale of a good man, Sergeant," he added. "A credit to the force. But I'm afraid the Department won't be able to tell the newspaper boys the part you played in this case. It wouldn't do at all for Loretti's lawyer to know how well you'd learned your job on the Pickpocket squad."

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